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Pomeroy

Traditional Crafts of Japan

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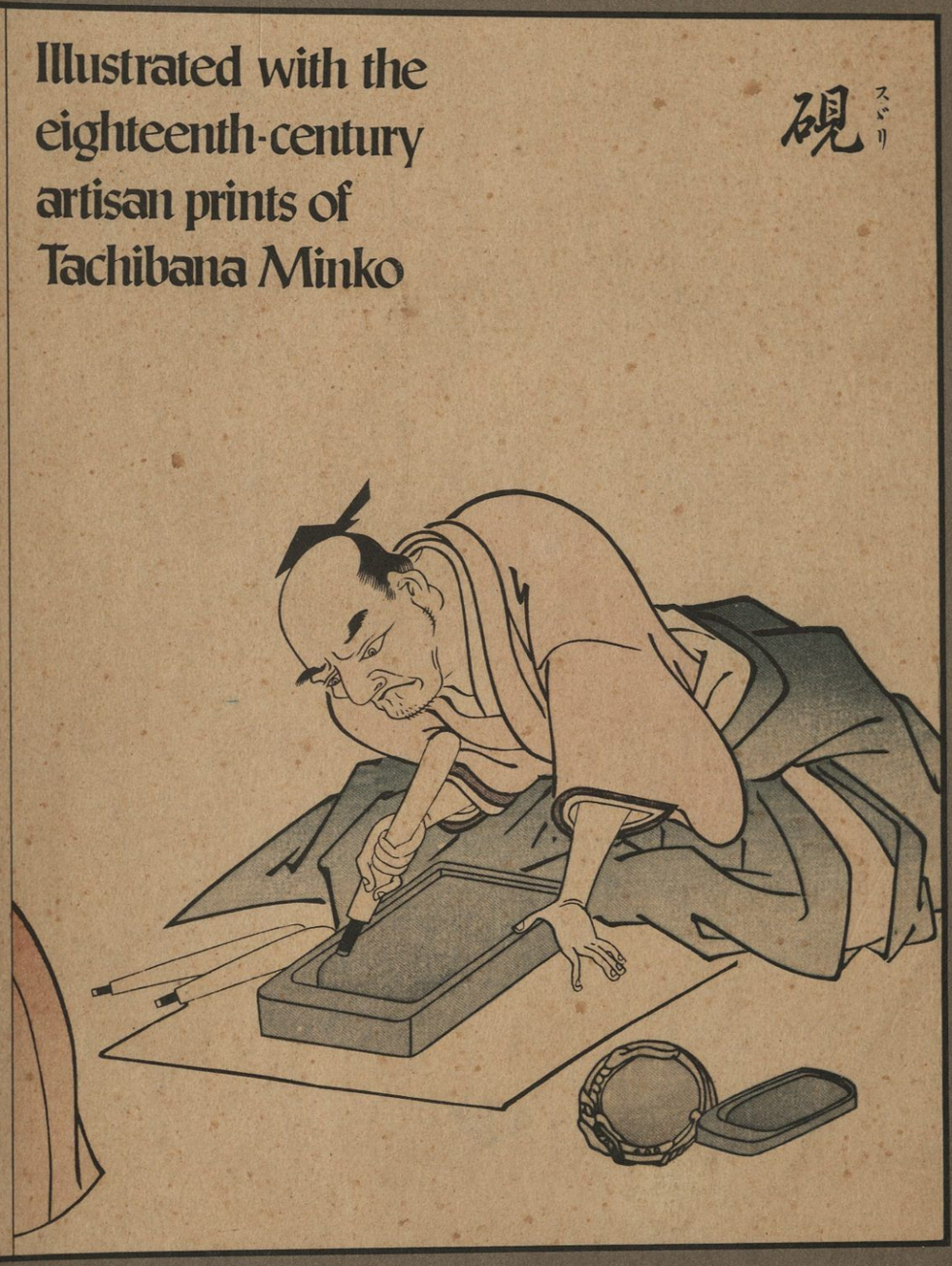
Illustrated with the eighteenth-century artisan prints of Tachibana Minko



by Charles A. Pomeroy

A NOTE ON THE DECORATIONS: Like the illustrations, all the decorations used in this book are reproduced from Tachibana Minko's *Saiga Shokunin Burui*, first published in Japan in the early 1770's.

The title-page spread is derived from two of the closing pages of the book, used here for their design qualities rather than for content. The black areas were characteristic of such pages printed from hand-carved woodblocks: where no words were needed, the engraver simply left the wood untouched. The left-hand page contains the publisher's announcements of his publications. The right-hand page originally contained the publisher's colophon, now omitted; and the book's Japanese title, taken from the label on the binding of the original book, has been inserted in the black area.

The characters at the beginning of each plate commentary, giving the Japanese name of the craft illustrated, are from the book's table of contents. These same characters have also been used in the binding design.

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INTRODUCTION

Of Artisans, Prints, and a Printmaker Named Minko

"One quiet evening during a fine rain in late autumn, the master of the Gyokujindo bookstore called on me with a book. When I looked at it, I saw that the title was *Artisans' Poetry Contest,* that it had a moon-and-love theme, and that it contained seventy-one poems. I did not know when the book had been produced, but it seemed interesting. . . . It had elegant illustrations in classical style. And since I had drawn pictures from an early age as a pastime, I copied several of the illustrations, omitting those of the medicine peddler and of crafts that are now obsolete and adding some to show such unusual occupations as that of the stonecutter who makes the serrations on millstones and such modern crafts as that of the glassblower."

These lines were written in 1770 by a relatively unknown Japanese artist named Tachibana Minko. They are from the preface to his book called *Colored Pictures of Classified Artisans* (Saiga Shokunin Burui), and it is the illustrations from that book that provide the reason for this one. Of Minko himself, more will be said later on, but for the present it is interesting to note that he apparently wanted his artisan pictures to be up to date and that in 1770 glassblowing, for example, was "modern." In omitting the crafts that were already obsolete in his day and introducing others that he considered modern, he could not have known how many of his own pictures would in time portray obsolete crafts. The passage of almost two centuries since Minko's book was published has brought about the disappearance of a number of these crafts from the Japanese scene. Changes in fashion, custom, and techniques of manufacture have long since eliminated the armorer, the swordsmith, and the makers of millstones, ceremonial hats, and metal mirrors. Other old-time craftsmen, like the cordmaker and the cardmaker, have all but succumbed to the dominance of the machine, and it will probably not be long before the maker of paper umbrellas and certain of his fellow artisans leave the stage.

Their passing is in many ways a matter for regret, since their products have often had intrinsic beauty as well as utilitarian value, but time is inexorable, and progress has its own demands. It is fortunate, in any case, that Japanese artists like Minko undertook to record the old-time crafts and thereby made it possible for later generations to see what these crafts were like. Certainly their pictorial efforts are a boon to modern-day collectors of Japanese curios and antiques.

And yet a surprising number of the twenty-eight crafts that Minko pictured in his book have survived. Japanese potters, for example, have sturdily withstood the mechanization of the ceramic industry, and their work today commands a respect that extends far beyond the islands of their own country. Japanese weavers and dyers, although their craft has been largely taken over by machines, still produce fabrics that attract the eyes of women throughout the world. The makers of inkstones, writing brushes, and handmade paper still supply the tools and materials for the arts of calligraphy, ink

painting, and woodblock printing. And the craftsmen who make bamboo baskets and folding fans seem hardly less busy than their Edo-period predecessors were in the days when they found their place in Minko's gallery of artisan portraits.

The idea of an artisans' poetry contest, as set forth in the title of the book that Minko received from the master of the Gyokujindo, may seem quaint indeed until it is recalled that in Japan practically everybody writes poetry. Poetry contests, which had originated with the nobility in the Heian period (794–1185), became popular among the commonfolk during the succeeding Kamakura period (1185–1333), when a large number of picture scrolls and albums portraying famous poets and poetry contests were painted. The earliest known picture scroll of artisans takes for its subject a poetry contest held by persons of such assorted occupations as a blacksmith, a founder, a sword polisher, a doctor, and a soothsayer—all of them artisans according to the definition of the term at that time: shokunin or people of the lower classes who earned their living through the practice of one skill or another. Later scrolls of the artisan type were to admit others to the catalogue, including scribes and merchants and, foreshadowing two favorite themes of the Edo-period woodblock print artists, actors and courtesans.

Artisans in particular became the subjects of painting during the Kamakura period and remained a popular theme in the centuries that followed. But the paintings were not for the enjoyment of the artisans themselves, at least not until the Edo period, which opened early in the seventeenth century and continued until the middle of the nineteenth. They were intended, rather, for the enterainment of the cultured upper classes, and they were usually embellished with poems or other literary inscriptions to add interest and to give a cultivated tone to the scenes portrayed. There is in this, of course, an echo of Marie Antoinette and her courtly companions playing at being milkmaids and farmers, but the Japanese aristocracy contented itself with looking at pictures of the amusing commoners and never thought of impersonating them in frivolous masquerades.

In the Edo period, however, the situation changed, for Japanese artists acquired an entirely new class of patrons. These were the townsmen, chiefly merchants, who had emerged into prominence on the economic scene and were demanding an art that was intimately in touch with their daily life. Their demand was met by an equally new class of "town" artists who knew what the townsmen wanted and gave it to them by introducing a new style in keeping with their patrons' tastes. Among these artists was Tachibana Minko, whose engaging prints form the heart of the present book. Like those of his contemporaries, his works were shaped by the times.

At the end of the sixteenth century the military regime known as the Tokugawa

shogunate prepared for its 250-year period of rule. Its founder, Tokugawa Ieyasu, chose as his headquarters a village in eastern Japan named Edo, made it the de facto capital, and laid the groundwork for its development into a flourishing metropolis that was one day to become the city of Tokyo. The rapid expansion of Edo gave it a boom-town atmosphere, and for the first time in Japanese history the lower classes—the artisans as well as their merchant patrons—achieved an economic importance that enabled them to create a culture of their own. The result was the gaudy, bawdy, extravagant plebeian culture that produced (to name only a few of its creations) flamboyant kimono, yuzen dyeing, the Kabuki, the geisha, the celebrated Yoshiwara red-light district, and the no less celebrated ukiyo-e woodblock print.

This is not to say that the Edo period saw the invention of the woodblock print, for it had existed in Japan since the eighth century, at least, and had been used first for religious and then for more and more profane purposes. But the craft of woodblock printing reached its climax in the late eighteenth century with the appearance of the ukiyo-e, the "pictures of the floating world" created by such masters as Harunobu, Kiyonaga, Utamaro, and Sharaku. A little later in time, but still in the great tradition, came the finest prints of Hokusai and Hiroshige, and then the art decayed. It was to enjoy a brilliant resurrection in the twentieth century, but in the form of modern prints and not as ukiyo-e. Woodblock prints of the floating world, even though they are still assiduously and cleverly copied for sale as reproductions (and sometimes, regrettably, as genuine originals), are decidedly of the past.

Today, mention of the ukiyo-e brings to mind pictures of exquisitely beautiful women and secret pleasures, of grimacing and gesticulating Kabuki actors, of quaint and colorful landscapes and scenes of bustling activity in old Japan. These themes, however, comprised only a part—although the larger part, to be sure—of a catalogue that ranged from outright pornography (as in the completely uninhibited "spring pictures" and "bride books") to historical and folk themes. And among the many types of prints pulled from the wooden blocks of the Edo-period printmakers were pictures of artisans and their crafts.

Artisan prints were made throughout the Edo period, at first in rather crude style, as in the seventeenth-century works of Moronobu, and later with great refinement, as in the prints of Hokusai in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century. In between the crude and the refined, about 1770, Tachibana Minko looked at an illustrated book dealing with an artisans' poetry contest and decided to turn his hand to the production of his own artisan pictures. His outstanding success in that venture is reflected in the prints reproduced in this book—prints that were successful in their own day, that were admiringly and faithfully reproduced almost a century and a half later in a facsimile edition of his book (from which the present illustrations are

taken), and that retain their freshness and charm even now, almost two centuries after Minko created them.

In his own day, too, there was a freshness about his pictures, for his style itself was fresh, and his approach to the theme was new. His artisans are infused with a sense of dignity and pride in their work, and quite often they have personalities of their own. Minimizing the background, Minko gives a close-up view of his craftsmen and their tools in carefully composed scenes. Precise in detail as far as the woodblock medium permitted, yet soft in feeling, the prints reflect a strong interest in his subjects and a sincere feeling of humanity toward them. Although his women are depicted in the idealized manner of the ukiyo-e artists, his men are portrayed more earthily, for the most part, except for the poetic license that Minko sometimes takes with their costumes. His use of color in these illustrations is excellent. Superbly shaded, they are nevertheless bright enough to have great beauty without being so gaudy as to draw attention to themselves. The technique of shading, known as surikomi saishoku, is sometimes said to have been Minko's own invention, and he is supposed to have devised it while attempting to copy the colors in a Chinese picture book. It is interesting to note that he retains the classical literary touch of the "artisans' poetry contest" pictures by embellishing his prints with commentaries, poems, fragments of myth and legend, and similar odds and ends of writing. According to the preface in his original book, these were the contributions of one of his friends. Quite often they are inaccurate, quaint, and even preposterous, but in their own ingenuous way they add a certain charm to Minko's scenes.

At this point it may well be asked: "Who was this artist Tachibana Minko?" Certainly he has not been given a place among the great. No one ever mentions him in the same breath with Sharaku and Utamaro, regardless of how delightful his prints might be. Why should he have remained obscure?

The simple truth is that Minko was overshadowed by his great contemporaries. The little that is known about his life can be quickly set down. There is no record of when he was born or when he died, but it is certain that he was active in the second half of the eighteenth century, the fifty years during which the ukiyo-e prints reached the zenith of their artistic and technical excellence. Appropriately enough, Minko began his career as a craftsman, an embroiderer of decorative designs on fabrics, and he worked in the Kansai district, the region that centers around Kyoto and Osaka and has served as the cradle of most Japanese crafts. Evidently he considered himself capable of better accomplishments than embroidery, for he dropped this craft to take up the making of woodblock prints in the manner of Sukenobu, an artist who had become famous for his Kansai-style ukiyo-e. The influence of Sukenobu was cast aside when Minko moved to Edo and began to work in the "beautiful women" style of Harunobu,

the superlative artist who raised the curtain on the last and greatest period of the ukiyo-e.

But it was for his book illustrations rather than for his individual prints that Minko became best known, and these were produced during the two decades between 1751 and 1771. Among the works specifically mentioned in the brief biography that survives are a "picture calendar" of 1765, a kokkei-bon or "humorous book" of the same year, a share-bon or "witty book" of 1769, and a yomi-hon or "reader" of 1771. In 1770 or 1771 (the date is uncertain) he completed his major work, *Saiga Shokunin Burui* (Colored Pictures of Classified Artisans), and thus unknowingly provided the raison d'être for the present volume. Here the brief biography ends.

Around 1765, the year in which Minko published his picture calendar, Harunobu had perfected his key-block method of making polychrome prints, and, by the end of the century, to such luminous names as his own were added those of Kiyonaga, Utamaro, and Sharaku. Compared with these and other celebrated ukiyo-e artists, Minko seems to have been of minor importance in the overall sweep of the tradition. Yet, as is often the case with artists considered minor in their own time, such a designation for Minko was only relative in an age when popularity and fame were subject to the whims of public taste. It does not detract from the renown of the ukiyo-e celebrities to say this, for almost all of them deserve to be acclaimed, but it is true that those artists who came up with stylistic novelties in the more racy and fashionable prints—portraits of the beautiful women of the gay quarters and of Kabuki actors—had their names perpetuated not only because they were masterly artists but also because they chose the more popular themes. Lesser known artists, who were often as skillful as their brilliant contemporaries, usually sealed their fate in one of two ways: by being merely imitators of the famous and thus failing to introduce new elements of style into their work or by choosing themes that were less popular with the Edo-period citizenry. Minko, although he produced ukiyo-e in an individual style, remained minor chiefly because the popularity of artisan pictures was outshone by that of scenes from the demimonde. Nevertheless, there was still a demand for books like his, and he was quite successful, though not celebrated, in his own day.

When *Saiga Shokunin Burui* was first published in 1771, it became a best seller. In 1784, some time after Minko's death, a new edition was brought out, and, as evidence of the continuing esteem for his work, it carried an introduction by Ota Shokusan, better known as Shokusanjin, one of the famous writers of the time. Even as late as 1916, when the Edo period already had the flavor of ancient history, another edition appeared. Clearly, Minko was something less than obscure. And now, still another half century later and for a new audience, his artisans are once again ready to display their crafts.

TRADITIONAL CRAFTS OF JAPAN

冠師

THE HATTER

In traditional Japan it was the men rather than the women who designed and wore the fancy hats. The women, unless they were traveling or working in the fields, wore no hats at all, and even today a woman dressed in kimono does not cover her head. The gentlemen of Japan, on the other hand, early devised an elaborate system of hats and caps based on court rank (and copied from Chinese notions on the subject) that prevailed down to modern times—and still prevails in the costume for such official court ceremonies as weddings and coronations.

This style of headgear went by the general name of kammuri, which literally means "crown." Among the various kammuri for formal occasions were the raikan or "etiquette crowns," which included the bejeweled benkan worn exclusively by the emperor and the buraikan or "military etiquette crowns" worn by warriors. For the most part these ceremonial hats were made of thin silk or silk gauze, sometimes stiffened with a framework of bone or wood, although one of the emperor's hats was covered with gold foil. The color was determined by the rank of the wearer. Kammuri, strangely enough, were classified according to the thickness of their tops and were further distinguished by the style of the ei or streamer—upstanding, rolled, or pendant—and by several other types of ornament. They were usually held in place by a transverse pin thrust through the topknot, although some styles made use of cords for this purpose.

Later (it is not known just when) the gentlemen again evolved a new fashion in hats. These were the eboshi, worn on ordinary occasions by government officials and on formal occasions by members of the court who were not officials. As head coverings they were somewhat more substantial than the kammuri, but their function remained more decorative than protective. At first the eboshi appear to have been made of black silk gauze, but after the twelfth century black-lacquered paper came to be preferred,

and the shape of the hat and the style of the lacquering indicated the social position of the wearer. There were two basic types of eboshi: those stiffened by several heavy coats of lacquer and those lightly lacquered and softened by crinkling. The shape of the hat varied from the tall upstanding type (Japan's own version of the stovepipe hat) through the toppled-crown type (wind-bent eboshi, as it was called) to the rather more flat crinkled type. Whatever its shape, there is no doubt that the eboshi, like the kammuri, gave a certain dignity to the man who wore it.

Although the fashion in ceremonial hats changed from time to time, the changes were not instigated by the whims of designers or the urge for something new. Court rank and social position were always the determining elements, and styles tended to be preserved, as in the case of the kammuri used on official court occasions today. And even though the imposing headgear of the past has vanished from the general scene, it is still an important part of the Shinto priest's formal costume and, of course, the costume of the traditional theater and of certain festivals.

The explanation of the origin of the kammuri, as given in the first few lines written across the top of the illustration, echoes the inaccuracy of early Japanese chronicles. The account begins by attributing the invention of this type of headgear to Emperor Itoku, who is traditionally assigned the dates of 510 to 477 B.C. and is listed as the fourth emperor in the legendary line. Itoku is here said to have fixed "heaven, earth, and man" as the three types of kammuri. In historical fact, however, the kammuri made its appearance at a much later date.

History becomes a bit more accurate in the following lines of the account, which ascribe the determination of hair styles for both men and women to Emperor Temmu (reigned 672–86), around whose time, we are told, the forms of lacquered hats and the general etiquette of headgear were also decided upon and gauze hats and eboshi began to be worn. The appearance of the types

冠（カムリ）

抑も冠の
濫觴（ハシマリ）は
人皇第四の帝
懿德天皇下代人の
三冠を制さるゝ
其後下武の帝の
御時に至て男女
ともに先て髮を結ぶるとなりて
是より漆塗の冠試用ひらく

禮儀定り今の紗冠烏帽子も
ちなに起ほとゝふ又文武帝の
比より厚額うすき額透彩を
制せ透彩ひは其頂に鐵月の
こゝ羅をもて張ほ世に
月額ともいへり十五歳以上の
帝子家に壯年を浅させんことを
誡るとかしこくも君子代のおしん
めくに仰くも恐あり百官儀に
としく是をいたゞく
烏帽子は數ほ美ふるに
いと酒なし中にも風折
恋ほし
在五中將業平を
はしめとしたとゝふ

of kammuri classified according to the thickness of their tops is assigned to the reign of Emperor Mommu (698–707), and special attention is given to one of these types, the tsukibitai, which is described as having had a "thin moon" decoration attached to the top and as having been presented to noble boys over fifteen as a symbol designed to evoke the spirit of manliness.

The account ends by remarking on the great number of eboshi styles and by attributing the invention of the above-noted "wind-bent" eboshi to the Heian-period poet Narihira. Narihira, it should be mentioned, was as celebrated for his good looks as for his poetry.

The hatter is shown visiting a warrior, who is inspecting a kammuri with an upstanding streamer. The warrior's kimono is prominently decorated with a design of his family crest, representing a group of arrows tied together. In front of him is an ornamental table and behind him a screen painted in a favorite style of the Edo period.

The hatter, attired in a costume that marks him as a gentleman, although of lower rank than the warrior, holds in his left hand a "wind-bent" eboshi to which he seems to have put a few final touches of lacquer with the spatula held in his right. The hexagonal box in front of him contains his tools, and its lid evidently serves as a palette for the lacquer, which, since it is poisonous, must be handled with care.

鏡磨

THE MIRROR POLISHER

Kagami to misao wa onna no motsubeki mono de aru, says a Japanese proverb: "Two things are indispensable to a woman: a mirror and chastity." Another old Japanese saying maintains that, while the sword is the soul of the samurai, the mirror is the soul of a woman. That this concept of the mirror held true in old Japan is proved by the superstition that a mirror must always be kept covered when it was not in use. Otherwise, since it held the soul of its owner, the soul would escape and the owner would die. Perhaps there is something of the same reasoning in the Western superstition about broken mirrors and ensuing misfortune. But old-fashioned Japanese mirrors were not exactly easy to break, for they were made of metal rather than glass. Nevertheless, they were treated with a respect bordering on reverence, and their history is a long and venerable one.

In fact, if one is to believe the *Nihongi* (Chronicles of Japan), the mirror played an important role from the very beginning of things. According to this ancient record, there was a handsome deity who went by the name of Prince Celestial Mirror, and, even more intriguing, both the sun goddess and the moon god were born through the magic of a mirror made of "white copper." Later the mirror was to become associated with the sun goddess in a number of ways. Once, for example, when she hid herself in a cave and plunged the world into darkness in a fit of pique at the practical jokes of her unruly brother, it was a mirror that helped persuade her to relent. One of her fellow deities, we are told, hung the mirror on a tree outside the cave, while a personable young goddess performed a suggestive dance that sent all the other gods and goddesses (of whom there were thousands) into gales of laughter. The uproar caused the sun goddess to peek from behind the stone that covered the mouth of the cave, and natural feminine curiosity attracted her to the mirror, with the result that several of the stronger gods were able to push aside the stone and pull her out. And it was this very mirror, we are assured, that became one of the "three treasures" that made up the imperial regalia of Japan. Along with the other two treasures, a jewel and a sword, it was brought from heaven by the deity Ninigi no Mikoto when the sun goddess dispatched him to rule the islands of Japan. Even today, it should be noted, a mirror is often set up in a Shinto shrine as a symbol of the deity to whom the shrine is dedicated.

Behind myth, of course, may lie fact, and it is fairly certain that metal mirrors were among the first products of China's advanced metal culture to reach Japan. The Chinese had counted mirrors among their civilized inventions at least a thousand years before the birth of Christ, and ancient records note that Chinese and Korean rulers made gifts of mirrors to the Japanese in the third century of the present era. Interestingly enough, archaeological evidence shows that Chinese mirrors were in Japanese hands at an even earlier date. These ancient mirrors were usually of bronze, round in shape and cast flat with knobs at the center of the back, so that they could be suspended by cords. The back was also decorated in relief, often quite intricately.

It was not long, to be sure, before the Japanese began to copy these Chinese imports. Though at first they did not go far beyond pure imitation, the members of the kagami-be, the guild of mirrormakers to whom this work was assigned, soon developed confidence in their metalworking techniques, and their artistic sense began to assert itself. The Chinese had usually been content to decorate the backs of their mirrors with bands of repetitive stylized motifs, but such sedate ornamentation seemed too inhibited to the Japanese. The result was that mirrors came to be embellished with a fascinating variety of designs: flowers and birds, animals, landscapes with human figures, and creatures of myth and legend. As the variety of decorative subjects increased, so did the variety of shapes and sizes, although the round mirror was always the most popular. Again, there was an increase in the types of metals used. To the traditional bronze were added "white bronze" (an alloy of copper and tin), iron, and silver. Polishing of the mirror faces was done with a fine powdered stone.

Pictorial design reached its climax with the advent of the ekagami or picture mirrors that became popular toward the end of the seventeenth century. The central knob and cords of the older mirrors were dispensed with, for the ekagami were cast with a handle, and now the entire surface of the back was free for decoration. Inevitably, however, mass-production methods were developed, and the individual artistry of the mirrormaker, except among a few craftsmen, began to disappear.

It seems a bit strange that mirrors of glass, although they had been introduced during the sixteenth century, failed to become popular at the time in spite of their superiority as reflectors. One reason for this, of course, was the rather late development of the glass industry in Japan. Another was undoubtedly the lack of any particular fondness among the Japanese for articles made of glass—at least until relatively modern times. In any event, the charm of seeing one's image perfectly reflected was impossible to resist, and already in the early nineteenth century—some time before the Westernization of Japan actually set in—the ladies in the woodblock prints have begun to admire themselves in Western-style mirrors of glass.

The account accompanying the illustration begins by noting that the mirror was originally a treasure of the gods. It then relates an ancient legend based on the belief that a mirror held the spirit of the woman who owned it. A faithful wife, deeply saddened because her husband must depart on a long journey, breaks her mirror in half, giving one half to him and keeping the other. When they meet again, the two halves will be rejoined, and thus the dividing of the mirror is a kind of covenant between them. But although the wife waits unhappily for a long time, her husband does not return, and as the days go by she gradually forgets her sadness. The appearance of another man upon the scene makes it all the easier to forget, and eventually she marries him. But then, at the instant she becomes his wife, her half of the mirror turns into a magpie and flies off to find her first husband. And thus, says the story, in a rather anticlimactic ending, the long-absent husband learned that his wife had deserted him. Disappointingly enough, we are

not told how the wife got along without her soul, but it is interesting to note that the magpie was a very popular motif in mirror decoration.

The print pictures two beauties of the Edo period watching a mirror polisher at work. Behind them is a folding screen mounted with a painting in sumi-e (black ink) style. The lavish decoration of their kimono is typical of the times, and it is amusing to think, in retrospect, how useless the sumptuary laws of the Tokugawa shoguns were, for they were inevitably evaded in one way or another as the Japanese love of decorative design asserted itself. Although it is impossible to say so with certainty, there is something about these two young ladies that suggests they are

courtesans: the pose and air of deshabille of the girl in front, the bright and almost gaudy kimono of the two, and the apparent nonchalance with which they are talking to the mirror polisher. Most telling of all, in this respect, is the expression on the face of the mirror polisher himself.

He is obviously enjoying his work and putting all his effort into it. He has slipped his arms out of the sleeves of his kimono, the pattern of which is the Japanese symbol for a temple, although no particular meaning need be read into this. The wood-plugged bamboo tubes evidently contain the finely ground stone with which he works.

大工

THE CARPENTER

The Western world hardly needs an introduction to the admirable features of Japanese domestic architecture, but the humble figure of the Japanese carpenter has tended to be obscured in the glow of praise for his creations. And it was the trade of the carpenter rather than the profession of the architect that made the traditional Japanese house a structure to be admired, for not until the closing decades of the nineteenth century did Japan have any architects in the strict sense of the word. Up to that time the plan for a house was drawn up by the toryo or master carpenter, and it was he and his assistants who built the house. Even today, in fact, the average Japanese house is constructed in this fashion, and the carpenter, although he may use modern tools, works according to a tradition that developed centuries ago.

The hereditary system that made such a tradition possible had its beginnings in ancient Japan in the takumi-be, the guild of woodworkers that was one of the many specialized groups attached to the dominant clans of the day. These workers had their own techniques for creating the various types of buildings required by early Japanese society: palaces and mansions for the emperor and the nobility, Shinto shrines, houses for the plebeians, and the like. In the seventh and eighth centuries, as contact with China and Korea became more frequent and Buddhism became the dominant religion, the carpenters found it necessary to adjust to new modes and methods introduced from the Asian continent—for example, in the construction of palaces and temples. By mixing these new modes and methods with their own native techniques and adapting and standardizing the results through the centuries, the master carpenters evolved a modular form that could easily be applied to buildings of any size, particularly residences. The entire procedure for constructing houses became fixed, from the observance of the religious purification rites and magic formulas of orientation that attended the process to the use of measurements and tools.

The canons were seldom questioned, and the master carpenters passed on their knowledge to their successors, who applied it in the hereditary way. The structure of society was feudal, Buddhism encouraged passivity, and Confucianism, also imported from the continent, made a virtue of submissiveness. There was thus no inducement for the apprentice to question the system or for the customer to question it either, since the standard forms, materials, and techniques made the building of the average house relatively cheap, simple, and fast. At the same time the house was suitably adapted to the Japanese climate, aesthetically pleasing, and spatially flexible.

To build, the customer had merely to indicate the number and size of the rooms, specifying for each the number of tatami (floor mats), which were of fixed dimensions, and describing roughly the layout he desired. The carpenter would then draw up his plan and start prefabricating the posts, beams, and other key components of the structure. When these were ready, the ground plan was marked out with string, the stone bases for the posts were set into place, and construction began. Since the work required only a minimum of time and materials, the carpenters were free to concentrate on technical refinements rather than conceptual forms. The system produced high technical skill but little or no creativity. Although individual preferences and local differences existed, they were limited almost entirely to structural details. And yet, for all the rigidity of the system, it produced architectural concepts that are universally admired.

Today, as in centuries past, the Japanese carpenter may be seen at his craft. His tools and his costume are somewhat different from those of his predecessors, but his techniques are essentially the same. In reality there has been no break in the long tradition.

The legend inscribed on the print in classical-style Japanese reports that carpentry had its beginnings in Japan during the reign of the legendary first emperor, Jimmu, who is supposed to have come to the throne in 660 B.C. *The source of this information is given as the* Nihongi, *one of the two earliest Japanese chronicles. Carpentry, the* Nihongi *further reveals, was put under the authority of a Shinto deity with the resounding name of Ama no Akuruhi no Mikoto. Here the legend, becoming extremely abstruse and evidently forgetting carpentry altogether, wanders*

off into an observation about China and the planning of construction using clay and stone. And this is the extent of its information.

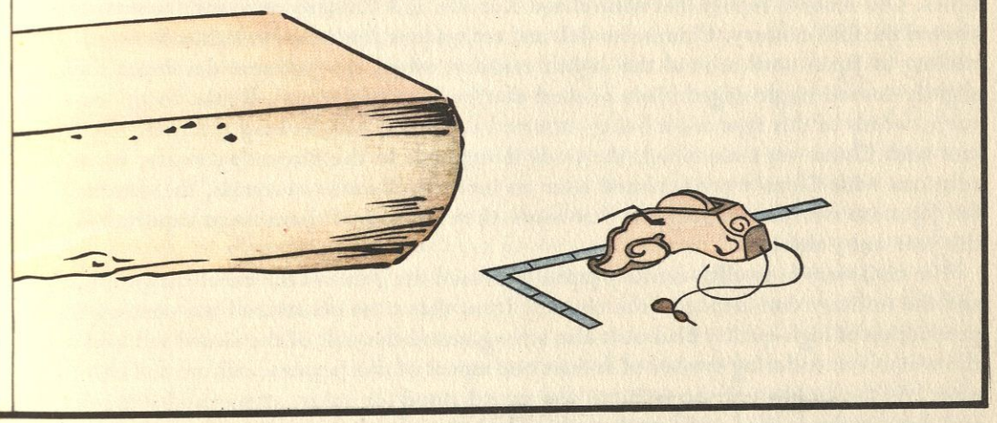
An old-time carpenter is seen dressing a timber with an adze. By using a crossed-hand grip he is able to move the tool in even, uniform strokes in order to produce a smooth surface. His job is not an easy one, and the days of sawmills are still far off. In fact, saws were not introduced into Japan until comparatively late in history, and the larger beams in traditional houses that remain standing today are often of roughly dressed timber.

At extreme right in the illustration are the carpenter's square and his sumitsubo, the quaint

工匠（タクミ）

日本紀ニ神武天皇元年
經ニ始（ツクリハシム）帝宅於橿（ス）原ノ宮ニ此
時天ノ明ル日命掌ルトニ工匠ヲ

莊子云郢人堊（シラツチムテ）漫（タリテ）其ノ鼻
端ニ若（エ）蠅翼ニ使メ匠石ヲ斲（ケツラ）レ之ヲ
運（メクラメ）レ斤（テヲノヲ）成レ風盡メ堊ヲ而不レ傷



device he uses for making straight lines on wood that is to be cut. The sumitsubo contains ink-soaked cotton and a spindle wound with a length of cord. To make a line with the cord, it is drawn out, wet with ink, held taut, and then snapped against the surface of the wood.

Like a number of other craftsmen pictured in this book, the carpenter has been somewhat idealized as far as costume is concerned. In real life he would be wearing less elegant and certainly less voluminous clothing. In fact, if it were summer, he would be wearing next to nothing at all, for it has always been the custom of Japanese carpenters to wear as little clothing as possible.

鍛冶

THE SWORDSMITH

Katana wa bushi no tamashii; kagami wa onna no tamashii, affirms an old Japanese saying: "The sword is the soul of the samurai; the mirror is the soul of a woman." Certainly the truth of the first half of this saying was beyond dispute in feudal Japan, and the cult of the sword survived even through World War II, for officers of the Japanese armed forces continued to wear swords as symbols of rank and authority, even though other weapons had outdated them. And no one who has ever watched a chambara film—the Japanese equivalent of the American western—can possibly doubt that the sword was indeed the soul of the samurai. A sword was among the three sacred treasures brought from heaven when the sun goddess dispatched her grandson, the deity Ninigi no Mikoto, to rule the islands of Japan. The search for a stolen family sword is often the subject of a Kabuki drama (in fact, the Kabuki could hardly exist without swords), and the myths and legends centering about swords are beyond counting.

Swordmaking, from both the technical and the artistic viewpoints, was the highest form of the Japanese metalworking art. The Japanese sword, unsurpassed at its zenith even by the celebrated blades of Damascus and Toledo, functioned as a symbol and a tool in the foundation of the country. Early swordsmithing was no doubt introduced into Japan by settlers from the Asian continent, for double-edged swords of bronze and single-edged swords of iron have been excavated from burial mounds of ancient times. Old records report that naturalized Koreans and Chinese were making swords around the fifth century. Chinese models and techniques continued to influence swordmaking in Japan until around the eighth century, when the Japanese developed the slightly curved single-edged blade of steel that became traditional. By the tenth century, swords of this type were being exported to China, and, as long as friendly contact with China was maintained, the trade flourished. In the fifteenth century, when relations with China were resumed after an interval of some centuries, the demand for Japanese swords was so great that more than 37,000 of them were exported in the year 1483 alone.

The civil wars in twelfth-century Japan increased the demand for excellent swords, and the military dominance of the country from that time on assured the continued production of high-quality blades. It also strengthened the cult of the sword and made the weapon an enduring symbol of at least one aspect of the Japanese culture and character. As the emblem of the samurai, the sword stood for valor, virtue, and strength and came to be looked upon with nothing less than a religious reverence. A whole ritual developed around it, and it became the exclusive property of the aristocratic warrior, for plebeians were forbidden to wear it except in special cases.

Reverence and ritual also surrounded the craft of the swordsmith. Before setting to work on the virgin iron and steel, he performed ablutions and chanted prayers of purification in accordance with ancient Shinto practice. During the forging process

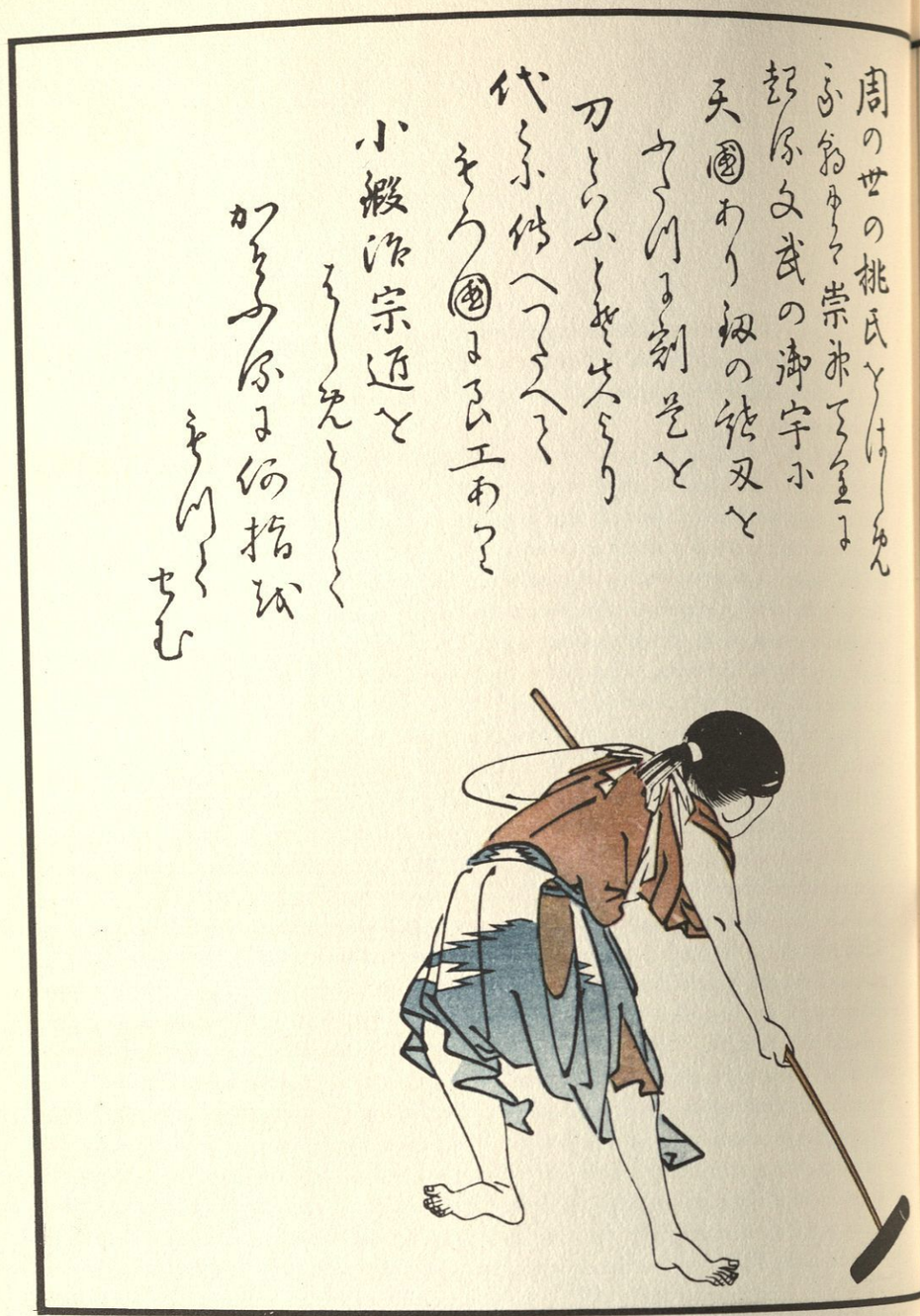
he became a kind of priest, abstaining from such worldly enjoyments as sexual intercourse and intoxicating drink. Even the costume he wore was a special ceremonial one. In effect, his smithy became a sanctuary during the several months required for making a sword.

Although the smithing process for high-quality blades was complicated and varied with the smith, the basic method was the same. Bars of iron and steel were welded together, notched, heated, folded, and beaten out to the desired length. In some cases the process was repeated as many as twenty times. After the blade had been hammered into final shape, it was finished with a scraper and a file in preparation for tempering. Since only the cutting edge was tempered, so that it could be brought to razor sharpness, the blade was covered with a mixture of clay and sand in a coating that increased in thickness toward the back, thus allowing for attenuated tempering. The blade was then heated to the correct temperature and doused in water that had also been heated to a specified degree. Grinding and burnishing the blade, after it had been minutely inspected by the swordsmith, was the task of the sharpener, who employed an elaborate procedure calling for the use of many grades of whetstones and polishing powders. The finished product was thus a highly polished blade made up of many layers of iron and steel, with the back soft-tempered and the edge hard-tempered to give it toughness and an almost incredible sharpness without making it brittle.

As a rule the blades were signed by the smiths, and thus names like Masamune and Yukihira echo down through Japanese history. And it is hardly cause for wonder that a number of swords, particularly swords from the Kamakura period (twelfth to fourteenth century), are included among the kokuho, the national art treasures of Japan. Nor should it seem strange that the Japanese expression for a conspicuously inappropriate act is "Masamune de daikon o kiru"—to cut a radish with a Masamune.

Swordmaking entered an age of gradual decline during the peaceful centuries of the Edo period, for decoration was often put above practical use. Nevertheless, a number of fine swords were still being made. With the arrival of the modern era, the craft of the swordsmith virtually came to an end, for an edict of 1876 forbade the wearing of swords, and after that only the more or less ceremonial swords of the military continued to be made. Today, rather ironically, many of the descendants of notable swordmaking families have turned their talents to the manufacture of fine-quality steak and carving knives for export, and the celebrated swords of Japan have become museum pieces and family heirlooms.

According to the historical account accompanying the illustration, swordmaking had its beginnings in China in the Chou period (about 1100 to 250 B.C.) and was introduced into Japan during the reign of Emperor Sujin—that is, sometime during the early third century A.D. The



account goes on to state that the double-edged type of sword, known as tsurugi, was "split in half" to make the katana or single-edged sword. This event presumably took place around the end of the seventh century during the reign of Emperor Mommu, from which time the art "was passed down from generation to generation and practiced throughout the land, there being many good swordsmiths." The account concludes by citing the ancient swordsmith Munechika as the founder of the tradition.

The swordsmith, in ceremonial costume similar to that worn by the ancient court nobility (including a hat of the eboshi type), is shown grasping a hot blade with his tongs and hammering

it into shape. Behind him, as emblems of the ritual nature of his craft, hang two shimenawa, the sacred ropes of straw decorated with folded-paper prayers that traditionally mark the entrance to a Shinto shrine. In addition to his large anvil there is a smaller one used for detailed work.

The swordsmith's assistant stands by with a long hammer of the type used for beating out the blades when they are red-hot from the forge. It will be noted that the boy's feet appear to be drawn in a most unnatural fashion. But he is not crippled, nor was the artist unskillful. It was a convention of the woodblock-print artists to use such devices to create a sense of heightened tension in their figures.

具足師

THE ARMORER

The craft of the armorer in Japan developed hand in hand with that of the swordsmith. With every advance in the cutting quality of swords, the armorers had to increase the toughness of their product. But Japanese armor, even though the men who wore it resembled in many ways the knights of medieval Europe, never took on the heaviness and unwieldiness of European armor and always remained light and flexible in comparison. It was not made of large sections of solid metal but of quite small plates of iron and steel laced together with thongs of colored leather.

Toughened leather appears to have been one of the earliest forms of armor in Japan, but this material later came to be combined with metal of various types and shapes to provide greater protection against swords and arrows without decreasing freedom of action. Some forms of Chinese armor were undoubtedly introduced into Japan around the seventh and eighth centuries, and this armor may have been of the leather-and-iron type made by government order about that time. The nobility evidently had their armor made to individual order, for examples of it have been discovered in their burial mounds, but the practice of having personal armor rather than government-issue armor seems not to have become general until the tenth century.

Early armor in Japan combined the idea of decoration with that of protection, and decoration continued to be an important factor because it helped to identify individual warriors and at the same time to invoke a martial attitude in the wearer. From the beginning of the Heian period in 794 down through the Edo period, which ended in 1867, the armor worn by the military gentlemen of Japan was often a good deal more colorful and elegant than that worn by their European counterparts.

The production of armor, like the production of swords, increased greatly during the civil wars of the twelfth century, and succeeding periods of civil conflict only heightened the demand. The Minamoto clan, victors in the twelfth-century strife that destroyed the power of their rivals the Taira, reportedly employed eight different types of armor, each with its own intriguing name, such as "eight dragons" and "swaddling clothes." The names of the armorers of this period are unknown, for, unlike the swordsmiths, who began to sign their works as early as the eighth century, the armorers did not take up this practice until the end of the fourteenth century. One of the oldest and most famous families of armorers was the Myochin, who produced fine armor for the imperial family as well as for the aristocratic warriors. So famous did the Myochin become, in fact, that by the seventeenth century they found

it necessary to issue certificates of authenticity with their products in order to foil their imitators.

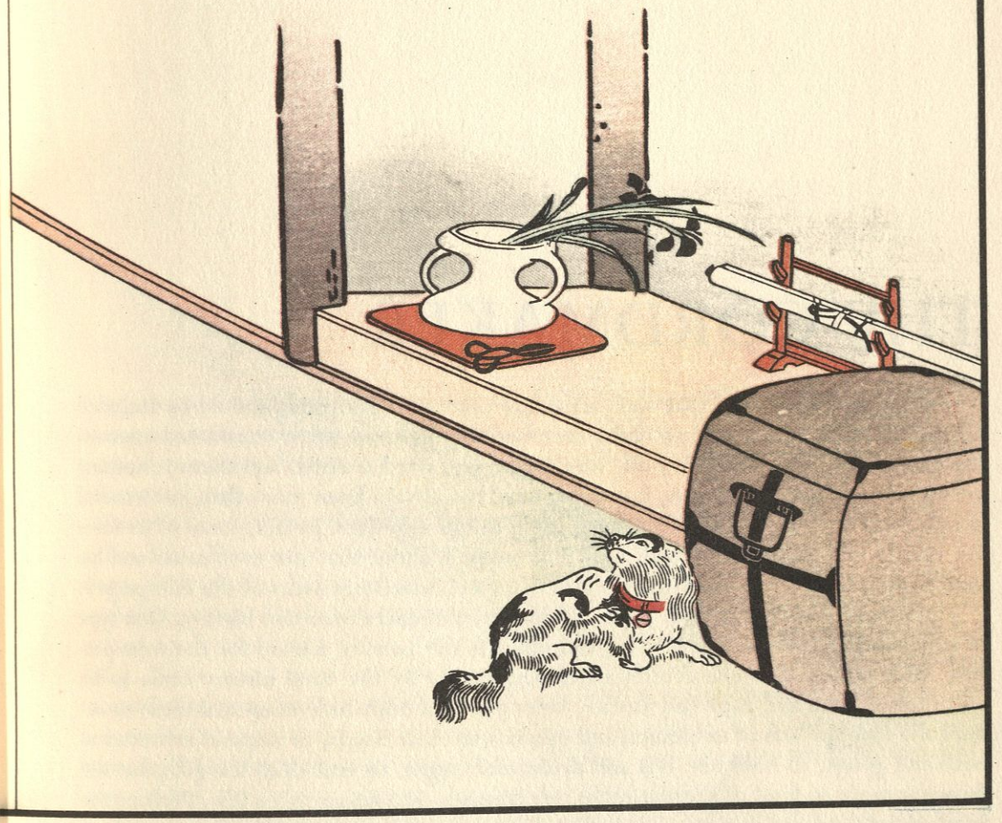
Naturally, in response to changes in the tactics and weapons of warfare, the materials, designs, and techniques used in the making of armor changed as the centuries went by. In the sixteenth century, for example, after the introduction of firearms into Japan, the Myochin family devised a type of "bullet-proof" armor, as it was called. But small steel-faced iron plates held together by colored lacings continued to be the favorite form of armor construction. A set of armor usually consisted of helmet, face armor, throat ring, shoulder guards, sleeve armor, cuirass, tasses, thigh armor, and shin guards. Lacings were chiefly of leather, and the platelets were fastened together in a marvelous variety of colorful and fanciful designs. One set of armor among the national art treasures of Japan is done in graduated shades of purple ranging from light to dark; another is a famous set of red-laced armor decorated in metalwork with a design of tigers and bamboo. Red was a favorite color, and, since camouflage was not a compelling objective, the medieval Japanese warrior presented a considerably more brilliant spectacle than does his drably clothed counterpart of today.

The metal platelets for armor were forged in much the same manner as swords. Both iron and steel were used, the steel being superimposed on the iron and welded to it to produce a platelet that could deflect or resist a blow without shattering. To reduce the total weight of a suit of armor and to allow greater freedom of movement, thinner plates were attached to fabric to form the sleeves. Guards for shoulders and shins were also constructed of thinner plates than those used for the body armor. Much importance was placed upon the style of lacing, as well as upon the linings and the leatherwork, and armor was lacquered inside and out. For all of its gorgeousness, however, armor decoration was subject to strict rules of etiquette, and there were limits on the extent to which a warrior's fancy might go.

During the Edo period, armorers tended to place more emphasis on decoration than on utility, and armor began to decline in quality after the seventeenth century as the craft moved toward commercialization. This tendency was heightened in the eighteenth century by a craze for woodblock prints showing armor and battle accoutrements—a new fad that followed close upon the publication of a number of books on arms and armor. But by that time it mattered little, for in any event the craft of the armorer was on its way toward extinction.

甲ヨロイ

甲ハ釋名ニ云
似リ物ノ之有ルニ鱗甲
始テ作ル之ヲ人ノ異説
多シ



續日本紀ニ云
光仁天皇寤龜
十一年八月勅
今革ノ之為ル甲

俗呼テ甲ヲ稱ス具足ト
蓋此六具満足ノ
之通稱耳

The not very enlightening legend on the print opens with the rather poetic observation that armor is much like the scales of fishes and the carapaces and shells of other sea creatures. It then admits, with refreshing honesty, that the early history of armor is far too confused for anything to be said about it with any degree of certainty. Nevertheless, in conclusion, it cites the Nihongi, *the often unreliable chronicle of early Japan, as authority for the information that leather armor was made by the order of Emperor Ojin, who reigned from 270 to 310.*

The elegantly costumed armorer is shown at work lacing metal platelets onto a tasse from the reverse side. As each piece of armor is made, it is hung from a wooden frame so that the armorer can work freely on either side. In the tokonoma at right is a vase containing irises. The flower arrangement has not wilted, as might appear, but has not yet been made, as the flower shears next to the vase indicate. The iris, incidentally, is appropriate to this scene of armor making, for it is symbolic of masculine courage and martial prowess, and it is quite possible that the artist had this symbolism in mind when he made his print. A single sword is placed on a two-sword rack at the rear of the tokonoma. The large trunk at extreme right, known as a yoroi-bitsu, is a special container for storing and transporting armor. The dog (or is it an exotic breed of cat?), like the uncompleted flower arrangement, adds a homely touch to the scene.

THE CORDMAKER

糸組

It may perhaps seem odd that such a prosaic craft as cordmaking should be included among the occupations that an eighteenth-century Japanese artist considered interesting enough to illustrate. After all, one might say, cord is cord, and there is nothing very special about it. In Japan, however, cord has always been more than just a useful commodity for tying up packages or holding things together. In fact, some of its roles are hardly less than ceremonial, and it is small wonder that the cordmaker and his craft should have their place in a gallery of representative artisans of the Edo period.

The use of cord and rope in Japan, of course, antedates recorded history. One type of prehistoric Japanese pottery, for example, is the Jomon, named for the rope pattern with which it is characteristically decorated. By the time history came to be chronicled, cord and rope had already been put to a multitude of special uses: to secure the fanciful hats of noblemen and officials to their heads, to suspend mirrors and bells and gongs, to hold box lids and drumheads tight, to embellish the gifts that the Japanese were so fond of presenting to one another—to name only a few. Perhaps the most unusual among ancient and medieval uses of cord are to be found in records of Buddhist ceremonies of the times. When the Great Buddha of the Todai-ji was dedicated at Nara in 752, we are told, the eyes were painted in with a gigantic brush to which were attached hundreds of cords. By holding the ends of these, while a priest wielded the brush, the devout were able to participate in the ceremony of "opening the Buddha's eyes." It was also a part of Buddhist ritual, when one of the faithful lay

dying, to place at his bedside a painting of Amida Buddha and his attendants descending from paradise to welcome the departing soul. And often, to enhance the illusion that the soul was being drawn upward, cords were attached to the painting for the dying believer to grasp.

Decorative cord was plaited in both round and flat shapes in a variety of diameters and widths. The material was generally silk or cotton, and colors covered the full range, although the darker and more quiet shades associated with traditional aesthetics tended to prevail. On felicitous occasions, boxes containing gifts were tied with intertwined cords of red and white, the colors of congratulation, just as they are still tied today. To be sure, the whole matter of tying gift boxes was governed by elaborate rules of etiquette, many of which are still observed. It is important, for example, not only to choose cord of the correct type and color but also to tie it in the correct knot when a gift is being presented to a person of higher rank or social position than one's own. In fact, the proper tying of the cord is a ritual in itself.

Plaited cords were quite likely the invention of women. Technically, cordmaking is a simple form of weaving in which threads are weighted for uniform tension and twisted together in a repetitive pattern. The simplest apparatus for this procedure in earlier days was an overhead framework from which the weighted threads were suspended in such a way that they could easily be combined. Today machinery has largely taken over, but the finest of Japanese decorative cord is still made by hand.

The account of cordmaking inscribed on the illustration attributes the invention of cord to women, "since thread is used mainly by women, who twist it and use it in various ways." The craft had its commercial beginnings in Kyoto, the account continues, when a certain thread merchant in that city began to employ women in his shop to plait thread into cord to the order of his customers, who could wait and watch the work being done. As a result, the shop "became popular and was always crowded." And even today (that is, in the late eighteenth century), the account concludes, cordmaking is still considered to be a woman's job. It is for this reason, no doubt, that the artisans pictured in the illustration are women.

Two women in superb kimono are seen at work in the cordmaking shop. The younger of the two (her long kimono sleeves suggest that she may be the unmarried daughter of the house) is plaiting a heavy cord with the aid of a drumlike frame from which the weighted individual strands are suspended. The older woman, whose short kimono sleeves imply that she is married and is probably the mother of the girl at right, is trimming loose threads from a newly made tasseled cord. Behind her is a cabinet in which skeins and bobbins of thread are kept. The scene, like almost all the others in this book, has been somewhat glamorized by the artist, but it would be ungrateful indeed to criticize him for having given it such undeniable charm.

元結扱

THE MAKER OF HAIRDRESS TIES

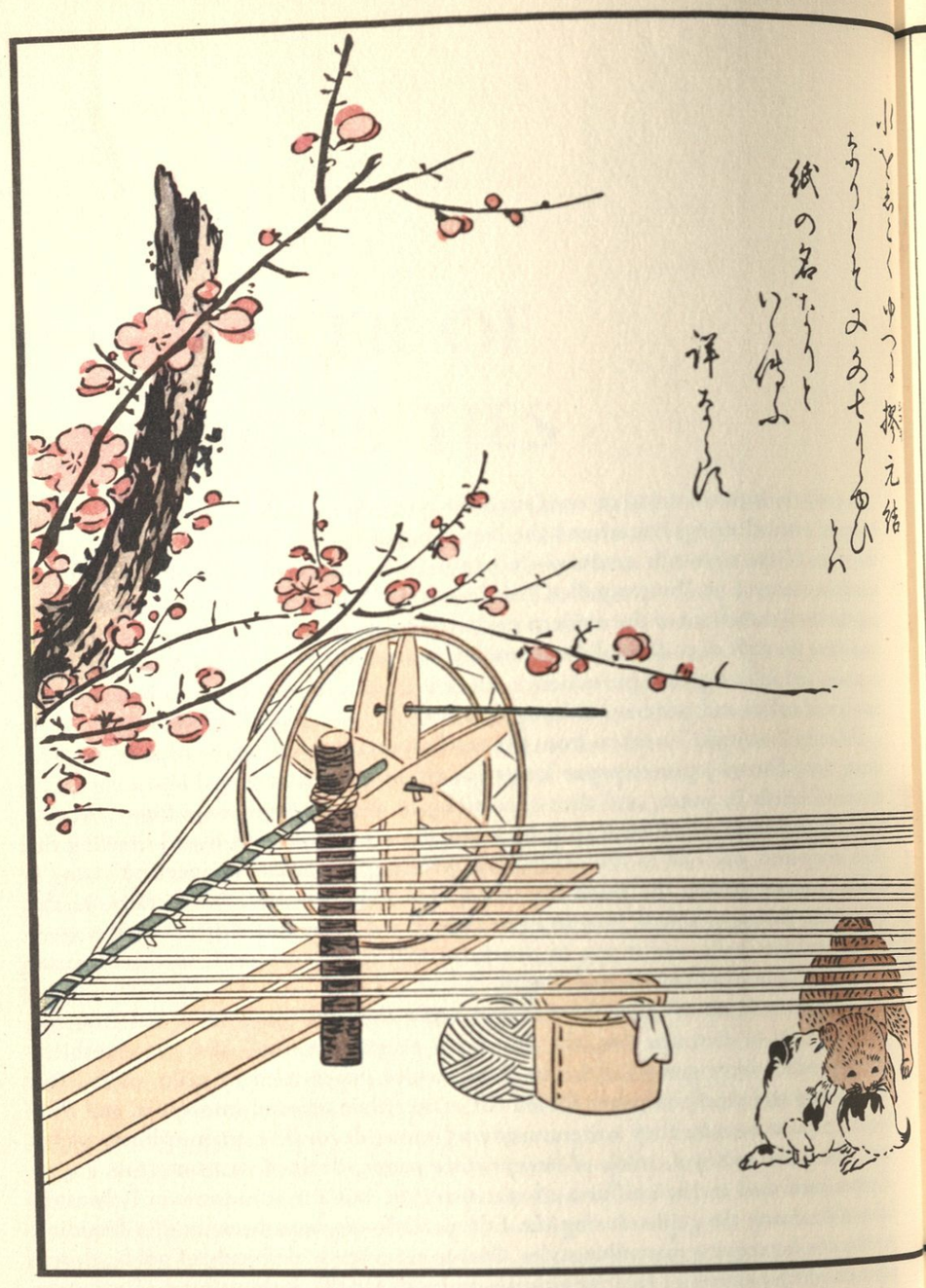
At first thought it may seem a bit absurd that there should have been craftsmen in Japan who specialized in making paper cord for use in hairdressing. The idea appears less quaint, however, when it is noted that paper hairdress ties were used almost universally by both men and women. Throughout their history, down to modern times, the Japanese wore their hair long and usually dressed it in a variety of elaborate styles that created a demand for motoyui, as the hairdress ties were called. From primitive times, headdress and hair ornamentation have played a prominent part in Japanese life, and until the modern age the style of coiffure, both masculine and feminine, was determined not only by age but also by social position. Interestingly enough, during the earlier stages of recorded history in Japan it was the men who wore the more elaborate coiffures—just as it was they who wore the fancy hats, as we have already noted. The women had to be content with drawing their long hair back, tying it in one or several places, and letting it hang down behind in horsetail fashion. It was not until about the sixteenth century that they began to pile it on top of their heads in the intricate styles that later became a memorable feature of the ladies in the woodblock prints. Even then, however, it was only the brazen girls of the demimonde who went in for such flighty fashions, and for many years women who considered themselves respectable still clung to the old severe style of the long, hanging horsetail. Meanwhile the men, who had in very early days tied up their locks somewhat in American Indian fashion, took to shaving the crown of the head and arranging their long side and back hair in a variety of styles of topknot to which, naturally, both hats and helmets had to be adapted, usually by providing an opening for the topknot.

The variety of hair styles became almost limitless, and even as late as a century ago there were more than thirty-five different standard styles for girls and women alone, among them the chocho mage or butterfly hairdo for young girls, the shimada mage (a high, puffed style) for girls of marriageable age, and the maru mage (round topknot) worn by married women. Similarly there were varying styles for young boys, youths who had come of age, older men, warriors, statesmen, merchants, farmers, menservants, and the like. Many of these styles, although sometimes in exaggerated form, are still seen today in the wigs of the Kabuki theater, and of course they appear frequently in this book. Needless to say, the hairdressers of feudal Japan were kept more than busy.

In early times the motoyui or cord used for tying up the hair was generally made of hemp or braided string, but around the beginning of the Edo period—that is, toward the close of the sixteenth century—it began to be made of twisted paper. These mizuhiki motoyui or "water-pulled hairdress ties," as they were called, remained popular until the advent of the modern period and the adoption of Western hair styles. And since the style of coiffure did not usually conceal the cord used for tying the hair in place, and in fact gave it prominence, the mizuhiki motoyui came to be made in a number of colors and patterns, although plain white was generally preferred.

The term "mizuhiki" is taken from the method used in making the paper cord. The strong, long-fibered Japanese paper known as washi was first twisted into long spills, immersed briefly in water, and then twisted again and stretched on a frame. At this point the craftsman wiped each spill by wrapping a cloth around it and drawing the cloth along from one end to the other, thus pressing the twisted paper and giving it a smooth finish—hence the name "water-pulled hairdress ties." Naturally, as the spills dried, the paper shrank into an even tighter and smoother shape. The ties were then wound into balls, and it was in this form that they were sold, so that the user could cut off pieces of any desired length.

Among many kinds of mizuhiki motoyui were the hira motoyui or flat ties, the yakko motoyui or footman ties, the emotoyui or picture ties, and the bunshichi motoyui, which were named after the glossy white paper used to make them. The hira motoyui were made of paper folded flat rather than twisted into spills, and they became popular because they were considered more decorative than ordinary paper cord. The yakko motoyui, made of heavy white paper, derived its name from a type of paper cord used in the coiffures of menservants, but for some reason it became fashionable among the geisha during the Edo period—perhaps because of a feminine predilection for copying masculine styles. Emotoyui were wide bands of gold-colored paper on which pictures of favorite animals or lucky motifs were painted. They were the most decorative and were, of course, most popular among women. Although it is sometimes mistakenly said that the bunshichi motoyui were named after a Kabuki character (Bunshichi is an old-fashioned masculine name), it appears that the bunshichi paper used in making them was named after its inventor. It is also known that they were quite expensive.



In the account accompanying the illustration, a poem from the Kokinshu *(a celebrated anthology of poetry completed about 905) is quoted to show that the word "motoyui" had ancient origins. The explanation goes on to say (not quite accurately) that motoyui made of paper go back only to the Kambun era of 1673–81. It then describes the process for making motoyui and ends by saying that little is known about the bunshichi motoyui except that it takes its name from a kind of paper.*

The maker of motoyui is shown wiping the wet spills of paper in mizuhiki fashion. His costume is that of a common workman: baggy trousers with leggings attached, a white underkimono, a short outer coat, and straw sandals. The band around his shoulders supports the coat (which he has slipped off) and holds back the sleeves of the kimono to free his arms. At left, under the blossoming plum tree, is the device used to keep the strings of paper twisted tightly. Next to it are a finished ball of motoyui and a water container. The two short-tailed cats add a pleasant domestic touch to the scene.

Here again, however, as in his other prints, the artist keeps to a minimum such incidental details as the plum tree and the cats. Attractive though they may be, they are not meant to divert attention from the main theme: the craftsman and his work.

$8.95

織殿

THE WEAVER

That the Japanese have respected the craft of the weaver from the very beginning of their civilization is quite clear, for weaving was one of the important accomplishments attributed to the sun goddess herself. Myth and legend in Japan give a high place to the figure of the weaving girl, and she is still honored with a festival of her own on the seventh of July: the celebration known as Tanabata. History also takes respectful account of the weavers, both native and foreign, who contributed to the development of the craft. Traditionally, the empresses of Japan have been sponsors of the arts of sericulture and weaving. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Japanese textiles eventually reached a climax of beauty and splendor that was to make them renowned throughout the world.

According to Chinese records, spinning and weaving were outstanding achievements of the Japanese as early as the third century A.D., but it is not until the Asuka period (552–645) that history furnishes proof of a flourishing textile industry in Japan. Among the treasures of the Horyu-ji, the eighth-century temple on the outskirts of Nara, are some astonishingly beautiful fragments of Asuka textiles that display a considerable variety in design and technique. It was during the fifth and sixth centuries that skilled weavers migrated to Japan from China and Korea in relatively large numbers, and these fragments of Asuka fabrics no doubt reflect a continental influence.

During the seventh and eighth centuries, Japanese weaving came to encompass a range of sophisticated techniques that reached a high point of development in the Nara period (710–84). In fact, it has often been said that the textiles of this period have never been surpassed in the history of weaving in Japan. The remarkable variety of materials and designs that appear in the Nara fabrics (samples of which are preserved in the eighth-century treasure house at Nara known as the Shoso-in) speak not only of the high level of civilization at that time but also of the cosmopolitan interests of the Nara court, for some of the patterns show influences from such faraway places as Persia. Among the types of weaves that were perfected during Nara days were the colorful brocade known as nishiki, a twill called aya which displayed a raised diagonal pattern, and a silk gauze called ra in which intricate combinations of four twisted weft threads were used to produce a diaphanous cloth. One type of brocade weave, the tsuzure nishiki, was worked in the tapestry manner.

Unfortunately, few specimens of fabrics have survived from the centuries that lie between the climactic achievements of the Nara weavers and the new splendors that their successors were to produce in the sixteenth century. It appears that nothing particularly novel in the line of weaving techniques was introduced during this long interval and that, although costume and fabric design changed with the passing years, the textiles themselves changed hardly at all. During the sixteenth century, however, as the arts of the Momoyama period burst into new and unprecedented splendor, the Japanese again began to take inspiration from Chinese textiles for the manufacture of their own, and the spirit of the times expressed itself in gorgeous fabrics as well as in brilliant paintings and magnificent architecture.

Among the new products of the Japanese weavers during Momoyama was a satin weave known as shusu in which either the warp or the weft threads dominated to give a smooth surface. Toward the close of the sixteenth century another new technique, known as kara-ori (Chinese weave), made its appearance. Kara-ori, which was to become extremely popular during the eighteenth century and to remain one of the most admired of Japanese textiles, is distinguished by a diagonal weave in which threads of various colors are used. It appears frequently in the resplendent costumes of the Noh theater. The weaving district of Nishijin in Kyoto became famous for this fabric and eventually emerged as the center of high-quality production and of influence on the weaving industries that now began to develop rapidly in other localities.

By the seventeenth century, when the 250-year Edo period began, the textile industry of Japan was flourishing as never before. Nishijin continued to be the center of the craft, and indeed neither it nor Kyoto as a whole has ever relinquished its position, for the finest of Japanese fabrics are still made there. During the middle of the period, kimono decoration became ever more gorgeous and luxurious, and the demand for rich fabrics only increased. The Tokugawa shoguns, in a puritanical effort to curb such extravagance, promulgated sumptuary laws one on top of another, only to see the luxury-loving Edo public find countless ways to evade them. If one's outer kimono, for example, had to be sober and inexpensive-looking to avoid scrutiny by the spies of the shogunate, there was no reason why its lining or one's underkimono should not express the utmost in elegance and expense.

With the opening of Japan to the West and the rapid acceptance of Western ideas and methods, the textile industry gradually became mechanized. The Jacquard loom was introduced, and Japanese weavers began to go abroad to study Western techniques. The introduction of European chemical dyes to replace the mineral and vegetable dyes of the traditional textile industry was decidedly a step backward, at least for some years. But the Japanese instinct for beauty of color and design was never completely submerged, and the celebrated yuzen resist-dyeing process that had been invented late in the Edo period has survived intact to produce kimono of fabulous elegance and, it might be added, of equally fabulous price. Nor has weaving by hand completely vanished from the stage, for hand-woven obi are still the most prized, and other hand-woven articles, as they do in the West, maintain a decided prestige.

The commentary inscribed on the illustration concerns itself, although not at all accurately, with the origins of weaving in Japan. It begins by reporting that "in the thirty-seventh year of Emperor Ojin" (that is, in the fourth century A.D.) two Japanese named Achishi-nushi and Tokato-nushi journeyed to China and brought back four woman weavers. These ladies became known to the Japanese as Ani-hime, Ototo-hime, Kureha-tori, and Ayaha-tori, the commentary continues. This report is clearly mythical, but it is worth noting that the names of the last two women are shortened forms of the names of two types of Japanese weave that were later to become well known: kurehata-ori and ayahata-ori. Although Japan had contacts with China long before the fourth century, the story seems to be based on an error. Japanese records cite by name two Koreans who came to Japan in the fifth century and taught Chinese learning, and it is quite possible that they have been confused here with the alleged Japanese voyagers to the continent.

The commentary goes on to state, somewhat puzzlingly, that "the kinran and kara-ori introduced by Nomoto-uji and Tawaraya in the Nishijin district of Kyoto are also said to be the beginning." This can hardly be taken to mean the beginning of weaving itself in Japan but must mean the beginning of the manufacture of these two kinds of fabric, for they did not appear upon the scene until around Momoyama times. Kinran is a type of brocade into which thin strips of

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gilded paper are woven, and kara-ori is the "Chinese weave" mentioned above. And here, without offering any further enlightenment, the commentary ends.

This print, with its close attention to detail and its relative fidelity to real life, must surely have been the result of the artist's on-the-spot observation of weavers at work. His genuine interest in the artisans of his time is perhaps more clearly evident in this illustration than in any other of the series.

The loom, developed by the Chinese for elaborate pattern work and known as a drawloom, is operated by two men. At left the master weaver controls the design by using both hands and feet. With one foot or the other he selects the foot rod governing the harness for the particular warp threads that are to be separated. Then, with his right hand, he picks up the shuttle with the colored thread desired and passes it through the warp threads. And finally, with his left hand, he slaps the batten against the weft thread to beat it into place. Meanwhile his assistant, at right, prepares and looks after the various harnesses.

Here the ubiquitous bamboo, which performs an endless variety of duties in Japan, serves as rods for the loom. The design and the borders of the fabric on the loom suggest that it is to be used as a woman's double-faced obi.

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紙漉

THE PAPERMAKER

Paper, like wood and bamboo, has been a commodity of all-pervading importance in Japan since early times, and the Japanese have never been outdone in finding a multitude of uses for it. Nor have they ever been outdone in the quality of their papermaking at its finest, and today Japanese handmade paper is unsurpassed among the papers of the world. Aside from its obvious use for writing, painting, printing, and wrapping packages, paper is used in Japan for sliding doors and partitions, screens, fans, lanterns, traditional-style umbrellas, cord, dolls and other toys, and a variety of lacquered boxes and other containers. In earlier days it was rolled into spills to make ties for securing the elaborate coiffures of both men and women (as has been noted earlier), oiled to make raincoats and other protective coverings, lacquered to make ceremonial hats (as has also been noted), twisted into cord for bookbinding, and even fashioned into kimono. And no self-respecting samurai of old would have been caught without his packet of soft tissue paper, whether he used it for wiping a bloody sword or a running nose. In fact, this same packet of paper is still an indispensable accessory to most Japanese today, although they no longer use it for wiping swords. On the Kabuki stage, of course, it is in constant use, and quite often, in an encounter between a young man and a young woman, it has erotic connotations.

Paper was one of the great inventions of the Chinese, who apparently first produced it around the beginning of the second century A.D. This, it should be noted, was pure rag paper, and it is therefore likely that a long period of development preceded the stage of perfection that it represented. Interestingly enough, it was not until more than ten centuries later that the Chinese knowledge of papermaking finally made its way to Europe. The materials of Chinese papermaking included bark, hemp, rags, old fishing nets, and the like. These were pounded in mortars and mixed with water to form a thin paste or pulp which was then poured over pieces of fabric, such as linen, and these in turn were stretched on a wooden frame and dried in the sun. Then the sheets of paper were stripped from the fabric and flattened. Later in the history of papermaking the fabric "mold" was replaced by a mat of bamboo strips laced together with silk threads.

A Buddhist priest from Korea, known to the Japanese as Doncho, is credited with introducing the Chinese method of papermaking into Japan in the seventh century, but a primitive form of the craft must have existed there in earlier times. Some Japanese scholars believe this to be true because the Japanese word for paper, kami, was in use before the introduction of the Chinese papermaking technique and because, as early as the third century, the Japanese were using hemp and a type of paper mulberry to make primitive textiles.

In any event, by the eighth century there had been a great increase in the quantity and types of paper being used. To begin with, the government had discovered the fascinations of paper and, in the manner of governments everywhere, readily devised ways to use as much of it as possible. Again, the spread of Buddhism throughout Japan called for a tremendous amount of copying of sacred scriptures (sutras) and other documents for new temples and monasteries, and for this still more paper was needed. At the same time, as more and more of the aristocracy took up the arts of calligraphy and ink painting, the demand became even greater.

At first, it appears, the most common material for papermaking in Japan was hemp, but by the ninth century the paper mulberry known as kozo had come to be preferred, especially for the paper used in the copying of sutras. As time went on, other materials came into use, but kozo has continued to be a favorite during the more than ten centuries that have passed since the first paper was made with it. Many of the fine types of paper produced in medieval Japan came from the imperial papermaking factory known as the kanya-in, but private papermakers became more and more important in the industry as the original crude processes became more and more refined. The progressive improvement in the manufacture of paper continued down to the Edo period, when the craft reached a climax of perfection. The two forces that pushed the papermakers toward this perfection were the makers of woodblock prints, who demanded more and more paper of finer quality, and the feudal lords in whose domains the craft of papermaking provided a primary source of income.

Today, machines supply the bulk of papers on the Japanese market, but so excellent are the handmade papers, particularly those made for such processes as woodblock printing, that the craft of the old-style papermaker has endured. Although some steps in the technique have been modernized since the Edo period, it is essentially the same as it was when the Korean priest introduced it in the seventh century. The macerated bark that forms the main ingredient is mixed with water in a vat to make a thin pulp. Into this the papermaker dips his mold, a simple rectangular wooden frame enclosing parallel splints of bamboo bound together with strong thread in the manner of a bamboo blind. He then shakes the frame to make the fibers of bark in the pulp interlock as the water sieves through. The water remaining on top of the sheet of paper that has formed is drained off the deckle edge, and the sheet is then lifted off the mold and placed on a small stand, where it continues to drain. Successive sheets are stacked on top of one another, since they do not stick together. Later they are brushed onto boards (or onto a warmed metal surface) for drying, and the process is complete.

The legend on the print is not satisfied to let the Korean priest Doncho take full credit for introducing the Chinese method of papermaking into Japan. It begins by piously reporting that paper was first successfully made in Japan in the seventh century by Prince Shotoku in collaboration with him. While Shotoku is undeniably one of the major cultural heroes of Japanese history, there has been a tendency to credit him with fictitious achievements, and the making of paper may well be one of them. Still, it is possible that he encouraged the development of the craft.

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The legend goes on to report that the craft of papermaking spread throughout the country and that many types of paper were developed, including those called danshi and hosho. Among the well-known papermaking locales that are then mentioned are Kamiya-gawa (Papermakers' River) in Kyoto and Azabu, Sekiguchi, Imado, and Sanya in Edo. The legend ends with a verse involving a play on words that defies translation.

Two papermakers, undoubtedly husband and wife, display the traditional technique of their craft. The woman, with her kimono sleeves held back by a band that goes around her shoulders, dips her mold into a vat filled with pulp. After shaking the mold back and forth to make the fibers in the pulp form a sheet, she removes the sheet and places it on the stack at her right. The man, who has slipped off his outer kimono for greater freedom of movement, brushes the finished sheets onto a smoothly planed plank for drying. The brushing process gives the paper a smooth finish on one side and a rough one, bearing the brush marks, on the other. Both papermakers have tied towels around their heads to prevent loose hair from falling on the sheets.

The seemingly misshapen vat and the plank do not indicate a lack of skill in the artist. They are drawn according to Japanese, not Western, conventions of perspective, and no Japanese of the time found anything strange about them at all.

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彫師

THE ENGRAVER

At least one product of the engraver's art finds a use by almost every Japanese. This is the indispensable personal seal or han, bearing the characters of his family name—an implement without which he can hardly be said to have a legal existence. In effect, the stamp of his han is equivalent to his signature and serves him in innumerable ways, just as a signature does in the West. When he withdraws money from the bank or deposits it there, the transaction is noted in his bankbook by the stamp of his han. When he attests to having read and understood a legal or a financial document, he records the fact with his han. When a registered letter or a package from a department store is delivered at his home, the receipt is stamped with his han. In a word, by making this most important seal for him the engraver endows him with a legal personality. Even so, the han is only a utilitarian product of the engraver's craft, and his role among Japanese artisans has even more important and interesting aspects.

Carving and engraving in Japan date back to the earliest stages of civilization. Although the forms and designs may at first have had a purely magical or religious significance, they soon began to express a love of decoration for its own sake. This can be seen in the small pottery figurines of the prehistoric Jomon period (from about 5000 to 200 B.C.), the oldest existing carved objects in Japan. The Jomon figurines, which appear to have been fertility fetishes, are incised with features and designs that were almost certainly symbolic in intent yet reflect a fascination with form and decoration. The carving is crude, but it has the freedom associated with primitive art.

Bone and horn were also carved in primitive times as objects of personal adornment, but it was not until the first several centuries of the present era that disciplined conventions became strongly apparent—for example, in the designs found on bronze bells and the backs of metal mirrors, with motifs ranging from animals and hunting scenes to fantastic flowers and abstract patterns. Since immigrants from continental Asia introduced the metal culture into Japan, it can be assumed that they also introduced the designs.

Although the Japanese artisans soon became adept at the carving and engraving techniques imported from the continent, practically everything they produced was in imitation of Chinese models. It was not until the tenth century that they clearly declared their independence. By then, of course, they had mastered the methods and motifs and were fully capable of adapting them to the native scene and tastes. And it was a shift in the tastes of the nobility, their patrons, that encouraged the artisans

to move from the symmetrical and passive style of the Chinese toward an asymmetrical and more dynamic style that was almost purely Japanese.

This dynamism became even stronger with the ascendancy of the warrior class in the late twelfth century. As the military chieftains gained power and the ruling aesthetes of Kyoto waned into insignificance, strength rather than delicacy became the key word in sculpture and the decorative arts, and the carvers and engravers found themselves largely occupied with the ornamentation of swords, armor, helmets, and other paraphernalia of battle. Eventually such ornamentation reached a height of extravagance and gorgeousness that would undoubtedly have shocked the aristocrats of ancient Kyoto into speechlessness. This climax came during the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth century in the periods known as Momoyama and early Edo.

Magnificent as were the decorations on swords and other accoutrements of combat, it was the netsuke of the Edo period that gave carvers and engravers their greatest scope for imaginative and skillful work. These small toggles, made of wood, ivory, bamboo, horn, lacquer, metal, and a host of other materials, were attached to the ends of cords by which tobacco pouches, seal cases, medicine boxes, and similar objects were suspended from the obi. The variety of netsuke was infinite, and they were used by people of all classes. The netsuke makers outdid one another in the use of novel designs and rare materials, turning out miniature sculptures that were later to become the delight of foreign collectors. But the rapid Westernization of Japanese costume that began about a century ago brought a quick end to the craft by obviating the need for netsuke. The choice ones that managed to survive the general discard of old-fashioned accessories in Japan are now either in museums or in the hands of collectors and dealers who exchange them from time to time at prices that would seem hardly less than fabulous to the original makers and owners.

Today, of course, the talents of engravers and carvers are still in demand in Japan, for fine handiwork always has its admirers, and the revival of interest in traditional folk crafts has assured the survival of time-honored techniques among the artisans. And of course there is still the indispensable personal seal.

The account of engraving inscribed on the print is presented in the form of a story. The Japanese art of engraving, it relates, had its origin with one Goto Shirobe Sukenori, a retainer of the nobleman Zenkoin Yoshinori who was "imprisoned during the hot month of June after an-

gering his lord." A prison guard, taking pity on Goto, gave him a peach, and Goto expressed his gratitude by carving sixty-six monkeys on the peachstone. It was not long before Lord Yoshinori heard of this marvel and went in disbelief to have a look at the carved peachstone. He was so impressed, says the narrative, that he ordered Goto released and put him to work making decorations for swords. Goto proved to be an exceptionally fine craftsman, and his carved figures of birds, beasts, flowers, trees, and people "looked almost alive." His son followed him in the craft and became most famous, as did his descendants, the story continues. And the carved peachstone, we are told, "was enshrined in the Hiyoshi Shrine in the province of Hitachi."

雕鐫（ホリモノ）

The master engraver, seated beside his heavy work table, is shown painstakingly carving out a design with hammer and chisel on what appears to be a small dish for sweets. On the table are other tools of his craft: a small hammer, delicate chisels, and an iron clamp. A peony in a vase adds a decorative note to the scene. At the right is an apprentice in a crested kimono and an Edo-period coiffure tied with the motoyui or paper cord previously noted in the illustration of the maker of hairdress ties. It is not exactly clear what sort of small objets d'art he is scrutinizing so carefully or what implement he holds in his right hand. In any case, the trinkets seem to portray birds on a branch, and the implement may be a finishing file.

御簾屋

THE MAKER OF BAMBOO BLINDS

Bamboo not only grows with astonishing speed but also grows in abundance in almost all regions of Japan, and from the most ancient times it has been put to just about a thousand and one uses. The tender young shoots, which spring up overnight and can almost be seen growing, are one of the mainstays of Japanese cookery. The slender stems of the smaller species become fishing rods, handles for writing brushes and umbrellas and feather dusters and, ingeniously split at one end and spread out in palmlike manner, the handle and framework of the rigid round fan called uchiwa. Bamboo is used for ceilings, rafters, posts, railings, fences, and other elements of Japanese architecture. It serves as flagpoles, masts for boats, scaffolding, racks for drying grain, and poles for drying laundry. And this is only a small part of the catalogue.

The tough, woody boles of the mature bamboo, which are made up of hollow sections sealed off from one another by a hard membrane, are cut into sections to make a fascinating assortment of containers: small buckets, vases for flower arrangements, holders for writing brushes, and the like. The Japanese flute or shakuhachi is likewise made of a section of bamboo, with the hard diaphragms cut out and holes bored into it. Sections of very slender bamboo form the pipes of another musical instrument, the sho, which is something like a mouth organ and is used in Shinto ceremonies. And the larger boles, split in half lengthwise, may become watering troughs or gutters.

Even the strong, supple coverings of the young bamboo shoots are made use of. Butchers and fishmongers wrap meat and fish in them, and woodblock printers find them the best of all possible coverings for the baren, the round pad with which they press sheets of paper on the block to produce their prints. The hard outer skin of the bamboo boles is the chief material for basketmaking, and bamboo cut into strips is made into mats, carved into spatulas, laminated into bows for archery, woven into screens, and interlaced with twine to become blinds for windows and doorways during the summertime.

And here, although it is by no means complete, the catalogue must end, for it is the maker of bamboo blinds and his product that command attention. Of all the bamboo craftsmen who were at work in Japan in the eighteenth century, it is only he and his fellow artisan the basketmaker whom our artist admitted to his gallery of artisan portraits.

Since Japanese houses are designed for easy removal of sliding partitions, windows, and doors during the intense heat of summer, bamboo blinds are often hung in the openings to allow whatever breeze there might be to sweep through the house without obstruction, to keep out the glare of the sun, and to provide a degree of privacy, which is hard enough to find in crowded Japan. The more finely made blinds, called misu, are used in place of interior partitions; the coarser ones, known as sudare, are hung in the exterior openings. And, interestingly enough, even on windless days the misu and sudare manage to create at least an illusion of coolness during the stifling summers of Japan.

Although the making of such blinds might appear to be extremely simple, the craft calls for a considerable degree of skill, especially if the product is to have decorative as well as practical value. The bamboo strips are first cut to the required width and then cured to prevent shrinking or warping. Next, if they are to be used for misu, they are scraped or planed. Then, usually on a frame designed for the purpose, they are interlaced with twine to form a kind of close latticework that will allow the air to pass through. In the finest of misu and sudare the natural joints in the bamboo strips form a large pattern of one sort or another—for example, the outlines of distant mountains or a flock of birds in flight—and add a decorative effect to the beauty of the material itself. The more expensive blinds are rigged with cords so that they can be easily raised or lowered.

It must be noted with some regret that plastic versions of the old-style misu and sudare have appeared on the market in recent years. These, of course, are less expensive, but their color and their texture betray them, and no one would ever mistake them for real bamboo. Fortunately, though, for those who prefer the genuine to the synthetic, the makers of real bamboo blinds are still at work, and there are no serious signs that they will soon be put out of business.

Only a poem accompanies the illustration. It is taken from the classical anthology Fugashu *(Collection of Elegant Verse), and the anonymous poet is known to history only by the signature "a retainer of Eifukumon'in." The ex-empress Eifukumon'in, it is interesting to note, was a poet herself and, like her anonymous retainer, a contributor to the same anthology. Here is the*

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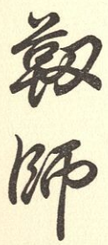
retainer's poem, simple and unpretentious but beautifully suggestive of the pleasures of spring.

When the rain lifts and the breezes rise
and blow through the bamboo blind,
there is the fragrance of plum blossoms under the eaves.

While the old maker of bamboo blinds arranges the weighted lengths of hemp twine across the top of the frame, his young assistant (quite possibly his son) draws a slender strip of bamboo

from the container hanging at its side. The successive strips are laid on top of the frame, and the twine is looped around them to secure them in place. Of particular interest in this print is the skillful way in which the artist has muted color and design in the clothing where it is seen through the blind.

The decorative arrangement at the left is a bit puzzling. The goldfish does not look particularly comfortable in his shallow bowl, but of course the artist may have enlarged him for effect. It is not clear, either, just what the plants are. They may be miniature trees growing from a rock, but one of them looks like the frond of a fern that has begun to open.



THE QUIVERMAKER

Although the Japanese had no firearms until the sixteenth century, when Portuguese mariners introduced them to the wonders of an early type of musket, they had not been behindhand in the invention of other implements for slaughtering one another and, upon occasion, their foreign enemies. Swords, of course, had been developed to a perfection that was to become world-famous; there was an impressive variety of spears and halberds; and for long-range destruction there was the bow and arrow. In fact, archery was second only to swordsmanship among the military arts, and the heroic figure of the bowman appears quite early in Japanese legend and history. Perhaps the most celebrated of the archer-heroes is the medieval warrior Nasu no Yoichi, whose aim was apparently nothing less than spectacular, for one of his arrows, shot from a great distance, shattered a folding fan attached to the mast of a boat rocking on the waves—and shattered it, we are told, by precisely hitting the rivet that held its ribs together.

Carrying a supply of arrows naturally called for a quiver to hold them. Little enough is known about the quivers used by Japanese archers before the twelfth century, although it appears that they were made of leather, wicker, and perhaps several other materials and were slung either from the shoulder or from the waist, depending upon the style of armor worn by the archer. A manuscript book from the Heian period (794–1185) shows a general of the guards in court uniform with eleven arrows arranged in fan shape in a broad triangular quiver slung from his shoulders like a knapsack.

From around the early twelfth century, quivers begin to appear in picture scrolls showing scenes of combat, and it becomes clear that they were made in a number of different shapes. In addition to cylindrical quivers like those used in the West, there were, for example, the shallow box-shaped quivers that appear in the fourteenth-century scroll depicting the Gosannen civil war. The warriors in the famous *Tale of the Heiji War* scroll carry abundant supplies of arrows in round quivers of basket shape.

The types and decorative styles of quivers of course varied with the historical period and the occasion. Since archery was also a time-honored sport as well as a military technique, the products of the quivermaker were always in demand. But as firearms gradually replaced the bow and arrow in warfare, only the sport remained, and the making of quivers became an extremely restricted craft. At the same time, the practical quivers of the battlefield tended to become more ornate. Often they were finely lacquered and decorated with feathers or animal skins.

More is known about the quivers themselves than about the artisans who made them. Although certain of these craftsmen must have turned out exceptional work, no famous names like those of the Masamune swordsmiths or the Myochin armorers have come down through history. Nevertheless, the craft of the quivermaker was once important enough to be included among those recorded by painters and printmakers as representative of the period in which it flourished.

Archery, of course, retains a place among the sports of modern Japan, but it is a very specialized sport and is practiced chiefly as a graceful exercise designed to develop coordination of eye, muscle, and brain. An interesting survival of ancient archery is the sport of yabusame or shooting at targets from a galloping horse. It is still performed annually at the Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine in Kamakura, and the archers and their horses, in medieval costume and trappings, make it a colorful and exciting spectacle.

The brief legend on the illustration is in two parts. The first, in classical-style Japanese, cites

the curiously titled old book Sansai Zue *(Heaven, Earth, and Man Illustrated)* as authority for the information that quivers were made of leather in many sizes. The second part quotes a poem from the Man'yoshu *(Collection of a Myriad Leaves)*, the celebrated anthology of ancient poems compiled in the eighth century: "The wife bids a sad farewell / when the brave husband departs / with bow slung on his back."

The print pictures a quivermaker and his assistant delivering a newly made quiver to the home of a customer. The quiver, which opens like a mandolin case and is tied shut with a red cord, is of the type used on the archery range. It has a bottom of leather and a top of wicker, which

seems to be lacquered. The quivermaker's kimono is decorated with the customary family crests, which the artist has exaggerated in size for decorative effect.

The boy in the doorway is clearly the son of the house. He wears a kimono decorated with a design of horses, which symbolize strength. The woman—it is not quite clear whether she is the boy's mother or a nursemaid—has a short sword thrust into her obi. There is nothing particularly unusual about her being armed in this way, since women in the upper levels of society in feudal Japan often had weapons of their own. The artist has apparently used the sword, as well as the costume of the woman and the boy, to indicate that they are members of a samurai household.

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THE BASKETMAKER

籠作

In Japan, as in other countries, the basket has an ancient history, but in no other country does it appear to have been given such a great variety of forms or put to such a remarkable number of uses. Miniature baskets of bamboo, for example, may hold the hot towels offered to guests in a restaurant; long cylindrical baskets of bamboo (gabions) are filled with stones and piled up to hold a river in its course; bottle-shaped bamboo baskets woven around bamboo containers hold flower arrangements; huge tublike baskets serve for conveying fish and other produce; and wandering Buddhist mendicants called komuso wear a head-concealing woven hat that is actually an inverted basket with a lattice window in it to permit them to look out without being identified. Even the palanquin used in former days to transport well-to-do travelers was a form of basket made of bamboo and was known as a kago—that is, a basket. And this is only a fragment of the catalogue of baskets and their uses in Japan.

Bamboo is by all means the favored material for basketmaking in Japan, although such other materials as rushes, cane, and vines are also used. Excellent bamboo is found in the district around Kyoto, and it was evidently in this region—the heart of ancient Japan—that the craft of basketmaking developed. Bamboo for basket material is selected from the center of the grove, where the plants grow straight because they are not exposed to strong winds. The cutting is done in early autumn, and the bamboo

is allowed to season for about a year. Generally only the outer skin is used for baskets, and the process of stripping it off requires great skill. Although there is an undeniable charm in freshly made baskets of jade-green bamboo, those used for flower arrangements are usually made of aged and smoked bamboo that has turned brown and taken on a rich, silky appearance. Such bamboo is often obtained from the ceilings of old farmhouses in which, because there are no chimneys, smoke from the cooking fires rises through a vent in the roof and thus, through the years, stains the ceiling material to a glossy brown. Sometimes, however, flower-arrangement baskets of new bamboo are stained lemon yellow or brown to give them an aged appearance.

The techniques and patterns of basket weaving range from the relatively simple for purely utilitarian baskets to the much more complicated and elegant for those used mainly for decoration, but even the simplest of everyday baskets in Japan have a quiet grace and beauty of their own, and even the largest and most sturdily constructed have a decided attractiveness of design. The Japanese love of basketry for its artistic effect is reflected in the use of basket-weaving patterns as designs for fabrics and ceramic wares.

The account that accompanies the illustration takes note of the great number of basket types and

observes that baskets are put to many uses on farms and often serve as decorations in houses. The province of Suruga (the present Shizuoka Prefecture) and the district of Sesshu (near Nagoya) are cited as centers of basketmaking, both being areas that produce a variety of types of bamboo. The flower-arrangement baskets and fruit baskets of Sesshu, the account concludes, are especially notable for the fineness of their work.

The basketmaker is shown seated on a fur rug, since his work must be done on a wooden or an earthen floor rather than on the matted floor of his house, where the dust and splinters would be more difficult to clean up. He is weaving a flower-arrangement basket in the diagonal pattern

known as ajiro—a favorite design used also for hats and woven doors. Behind him are a number of strips of bamboo bark and, at his left, two other products of his craft. The heavy knife is used to split the bamboo into narrower strips.

Perhaps the most interesting item of the basketmaker's costume is his tobacco pouch, which is suspended from his obi by a plain round netsuke—a toggle of the type that has been noted previously in the commentary on the engraver. The artist has added a humorous touch in the boy apprentice serving tea to his master. Quite clearly he is being scolded for stopping to play with the cat.

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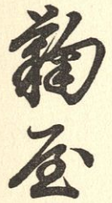

THE BALLMAKER

Westerners used to such games as football, rugby, and soccer may find it difficult to imagine that the football of old Japan was a courtly game—more of a ritual, in fact, than a sport. A look at the products of the ballmakers in the following illustration, however, should make it clear that the shape of the ball itself—to say nothing of the restrictions imposed by the elaborate costumes of the players—kept the game a good deal more sedate than its modern counterparts. Nevertheless, in its time—and it dates back to the seventh century, when it was introduced from China—it was considered exciting enough. At first it was a sport for the nobility and the warriors, but in time it also came to be played by people of lower classes.

The game, called kemari (literally, "kickball"), is known to have existed in several versions, each of which probably represented a different stage in its evolution. As played in ancient times by the nobility, it called for two opposing teams which attempted to kick a horsehair-stuffed leather ball between goal posts represented by four trees—pine, maple, willow, and cherry—all growing in pots. The ball was not spherical or ovoid in shape but more like a balloon tied and squeezed in the middle. According to one explanation, it was made by stuffing two identical leather bags with horsehair, stitching them together, and tying cord securely over the seam. In time, it appears, the ball came to consist of leather stretched over a bamboo framework and inflated with air. Later the goal posts were dispensed with, and the players stood in a circle and tried to keep the ball in the air by kicking it with the instep of the foot only. Traditionally the various versions of kemari were all preceded by a prescribed ritual dating back to ancient times. Today, however, the game is obsolete and survives only as an artificially preserved sport—for example, as an event in the annual festivities of a Kyoto literary group devoted to the study and preservation of customs of the Heian period (794–1185).

In her celebrated novel, *The Tale of Genji,* Murasaki Shikibu provides a delightful glimpse of a kemari match in the ancient style. Prince Genji and his latest consort, Princess Nyosan, are watching the game from a veranda of the New Palace. Among the players are Genji's son Yugiri and the sons of Genji's great friend To no Chujo, one of whom, Kashiwagi, is in love with Nyosan. The game (which, incidentally, Murasaki considers rough and noisy) is being played in one of the courtyards, and the four goal posts, as noted above, are a pine, a maple, a willow, and a cherry tree. Here, in Arthur Waley's translation and with its overtones of poetry and psychology, is Murasaki's charming picture of kemari in the long-ago Heian period:

"To no Chujo's sons, both young and old, were all expert players. Neither the hour nor the weather could have been bettered, for it was late in the afternoon, and there was not a breath of wind. . . . Yugiri soon induced Kashiwagi to join the game, and as, against a background of flowering trees, these two sped hither and thither in the evening sunlight, the rough, noisy game suddenly took on an unwonted gentleness and grace. This, no doubt, was in part due to the character of the players; but also to the influence of the scene about them. For all around were great clumps of flowering bushes and trees, every blossom now open to its full. Among the eager groups gathered round the goal-post, itself tinged with the first faint promise of green, none was more intent upon victory than Kashiwagi, whose face showed clearly enough that there was a question of measuring his skill against that of opponents, even in a mere game; it would be torment to him not to prove himself in a different class from all the other players. And indeed he had not been in the game for more than a few moments when it became apparent, from the way in which he gave even the most casual kick to the ball, that there was no one to compare with him. Not only was he an extremely handsome man, but he took great pains about his appearance and always moved with a certain cautious dignity and deliberation. It was therefore very entertaining to see him leaping this way and that, regardless of all decorum. The cherry-tree was quite near the steps of the verandah from which Genji and Nyosan were watching the game, and it was strange to see how the players, their eye on the ball, did not seem to give a thought to those lovely flowers even when they were standing right under them. By this time the costumes of the players were considerably disordered, and even the most dignified amongst them had a ribbon flying loose or a hat-string undone. Among these dishevelled figures a constant shower of blossom was falling."

The rather sketchy account of ballmaking that accompanies the illustration states that mari

(balls) were an invention of the Yellow Emperor, a legendary Chinese ruler of the third millennium B.C., *and were introduced into Japan during the reign of Empress Kogyoku (*A.D. *642–45), who enjoyed playing with them. These, of course, were not footballs but round balls (temari) of the type made as a pastime by ladies of the nobility: colored threads wound around a core of paper or cotton. Kemari, continues the account, is said to have been originated by Emperor Mommu (reigned 697–707) in 701 and to have been greatly admired by Emperor Gotoba (reigned 1183–98), during whose reign the courtier Asukai Masatsune became famous for his skill at the game. Later, says the account, two versions of the game, the Asukai and the nambake, became quite popular. Then follows a short poem by Jien from the anthology* Fubokushu: *"Beneath the flowers the sounds of the ball can be clearly heard in the gently falling rain." Perhaps "flowers" refers to the cherry-tree goal post, and perhaps, like modern football, kemari was played in the rain as well as in fair weather.*

Two ballmakers are at work, one stitching together the two halves of a football, the other tying the cord over the seam of another. In the background at right is the noren or divided curtain that marks the entrance to the shop—the same kind of curtain that is seen in many Japanese shops today. The caged bird, too, is typical of many Japanese shops and stores today.

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THE GLASSBLOWER

The Japanese, although they became acquainted with glass quite early in their history, showed no particular fondness for it—either in its artistic or in its utilitarian aspect—until a much later period. The reason, most likely, is that they found it cold in texture and appearance in comparison with the "warmer" materials of paper, pottery, and wood. Even today, although it has a prominent role in Japanese life, it is generally considered a Western rather than a traditional domestic material, and it is in its Western aspects that it is chiefly used. On the Japanese dinner table, for example, if it appears at all, it is still a foreigner among the native ceramic and lacquer dishes. Western-style drinks, of course, are always served in glasses, but sakè (unless one is being extremely "modern") is served in porcelain or pottery bottles and is drunk from porcelain or pottery cups.

Glass had found its way to Japan from the Asian mainland as early as the second or third century A.D., but it was not produced domestically until around the fifth century, a time when immigrant artisans from the continent brought with them the tools and knowledge of many crafts either unknown or still in the primitive stage in Japan. Only simple products such as ornamental beads appear to have been made. After the establishment of Buddhism in the sixth century, there was an increase in the production of glass, especially of beads for the adornment of Buddhist statues and for the rosaries used by devotees of the religion. The many fine examples of glassware that have been preserved in the Shoso-in, the eighth-century treasure house in Nara, are generally believed to have been brought from China. A few Japanese experts claim them to be native products, but this attribution seems rather doubtful in view of their quality and style, and some of them may even have been Persian in origin.

As in China, the development of glassware in Japan was eclipsed by the remarkable advances made in ceramics. Japanese interest in glass died out and was not revived until glassware was reintroduced by Westerners in the sixteenth century. St. Francis

Xavier, who arrived in Japan in 1549, is said to have presented one of the feudal lords of Kyushu with a glass mirror and a telescope. Both the Portuguese and the Dutch contributed to the development of the Japanese glass industry, and many of the Japanese words associated with glass were adopted from the Portuguese language, including, of course, the word for glass itself, *biidoro,* which is a Japanization of *vidro.* But *biidoro,* which was still in use less than a century ago, has long since been supplanted by *garasu,* the Japanese version of the English word. Needless to say, the Japanese displayed their usual skill in taking over a Western invention like the telescope, and today they are renowned for the precision of their optical instruments and of their cameras as well.

In the eighteenth century the art of glassmaking spread to Osaka and Edo (the present Tokyo), but it was the province of Satsuma in Kyushu that became most noted for its glassware, particularly kiriko or cut glass. The industry did not really begin to flourish, however, until a century ago, when the passion for Westernization swept the country. It is of interest to note that the eighteenth-century mirror polisher who appears earlier in this book is still working with metal mirrors rather than glass ones.

Although cut glass was especially popular during the early years of the industry, several glassblowing techniques were also in use. In one of these techniques, called chubuki (blowing in air), the artisan shaped the vessel by breath control and by deft handling of the metal glassblowing tube with its mass of molten glass at one end. An easier technique, called katabuki (mold blowing), consisted of blowing the molten glass into a mold. Both techniques are still widely used today.

The commentary inscribed on the print begins with the observation that glass was not a native product of Japan but was first introduced by the "red-haired men" (that is, the Portuguese or the Dutch) and that it was "very beautiful." Nagasaki is named as the first place in Japan

where glass was produced domestically, and the commentary continues by describing the development of the glassblower's craft and its spread to Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo. After taking note of the great quantity and variety of glassware being manufactured in Japan during the late eighteenth century, the commentary ends with the patriotic statement that "even things produced in foreign lands find their way to Japan because of the overflowing virtue of the emperor."

The glassmaker and his apprentice sit beside their furnace blowing small bottles with their tubes. A metal container with two openings fits into the top of the furnace and holds the molten glass, which is picked up with a twirl of the blowing tube and then blown into shape. The metal pincers

that each glassblower holds in his right hand are used for pinching off the newly blown bottles when they reach the right stage of hardness.

Among the finished products at the left side of the picture is a large bottle that stands on a box apparently designed to be a container for it—a suggestion that the bottle is of a very special type for use as a gift. The hanging shelf behind the master glassblower is furnished with decorated paper doors of the fusuma type, the sliding doors that take the place of partitions in the traditional Japanese house. Of the two potted plants, the one half hidden by the paper door is a bonsai or dwarf tree.

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扇折

THE FANMAKER

To the Westerner it may seem odd indeed to learn that the Japanese military commander of old included a fan among such accoutrements of combat as his armor and his sword. The fan, of course, was not a frivolous ornament or even a handy device for cooling himself off in the heat of battle. It was a symbol of authority and a means of giving commands. Boldly decorated on one side with a red sun on a gold ground and on the other with a silver moon and stars on a black or a dark-blue ground, it had ribs made of iron.

The fan as a symbol of authority has a long history in Japan, and even today it plays this role in the hands of the referee at a sumo wrestling match, but this is only one of the many roles that it plays in Japanese life. To cite a few of these functions, aside from the obvious one of helping to create an illusion of coolness in the torrid summers of Japan, it might be mentioned that the fan serves as a bellows for starting a charcoal fire or winnowing rice, as a dish or a tray for passing sweets during the tea ceremony, as a graceful and almost inevitable accessory in the Japanese dance (in which it can symbolize practically everything from a bottle of sakè to an oar for a rowboat), and as a marvelous means for shops to advertise their wares. No festival (and there are countless festivals) would be complete without its fans, among which are the giant fans carried at the festival of the sun goddess at Ise and the firemen's festival in Kyoto. Nor would a traditional-style wedding be correct unless all the participants carried folding fans, the spreading shape of which suggests an expansion of good fortune and prosperity.

Although some old Japanese writings modestly attribute the invention of the folding fan to the Chinese, it is generally agreed that the Japanese themselves deserve the credit for this ingenious creation and that they produced it in the seventh century. In any event, it is known that the Japanese were exporting painted folding fans to China in sizable quantities during the fifteenth century, along with swords, picture scrolls, wine bottles, and inkstones. Undoubtedly fans had been among Japanese exports to China before this date, but the earlier records are vague.

A number of variations were played upon the basic idea of pasting paper over ribs of bamboo. In one of these variations there was no paper at all but simply thin blades of bamboo to compose the surface of the fan. In another, the bamboo was replaced by blades of fragrant sandalwood, attractively carved to create a lacy pattern. A medieval version of the folding fan, used by court ladies, had no fewer than thirty-eight ribs and was adorned with long skeins of colored silk thread. In the Noh and the Kabuki the variety of fans is practically endless, and their nomenclature is nothing less than baffling to the uninitiated.

Equally unlimited are the uses of the fan as a decorative pattern. Naturally it appears as a design for textiles and paper—for example, the paper used on the sliding doors called fusuma, which serve as partitions in the Japanese house. As a motif on folding screens, it gives its name to a whole class of screens decorated in this manner: "screens of scattered fans." Ceramic and lacquer boxes are not only ornamented with representations of fans but are also made in fan shape. And it is hardly necessary to mention fan-shaped dishes and trays.

The rather fragmentary account of fans inscribed on the illustration begins with a few lines in classical-style Japanese which state that, according to a book called Jibutsu Kigen *(The Beginning of Things), folding fans originated in China during the reign of the Yellow Emperor and were made by "the military king of Chou." Since tradition assigns the reign of the Yellow Emperor to the middle of the third millennium* B.C., *this would appear to be much too early a date for the invention of the folding fan, even if the Chinese were to be credited with being the*

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inventors. The account expresses no opinion about the matter but goes on in vernacular Japanese to say that there are many types of folding fans and that they first appeared in Japan after the third-century invasion of Korea by the warrior-empress Jingo, who conceived the idea of making fans in imitation of the wings of a bat. (In this connection it is interesting to note that the folding fan once had the name of kawahori, which is an archaic word for "bat.") From that time on, says the account, folding fans made of cypress wood were used by the imperial family. The last part of the account has only the remotest connection with fans. It is merely a poetic allusion to a moment in the life of Genji the Shining Prince, hero of Murasaki's famous novel.

Because fanmaking required dexterity and a delicate touch, it was usually a woman's occupation. The elegantly dressed girl on the left is seen inspecting a spread-out fan. At her side are a set of bamboo ribs for a fan, a paste tray, and a broad brush for pasting the paper on the ribs. The woman on the right has just finished pleating the paper for a fan. On the table at her left, under the rulerlike stick that she uses to make the creases, are two other pleated coverings for fans. The large fan-shaped box at extreme right appears to be a container for unpleated sheets of fan paper. In the right foreground, next to the table, is a charcoal brazier, the standard heating device in the traditional Japanese house.

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琴師

THE KOTO MAKER

The horizontal harplike koto, although its history dates back to ancient times, is by no means an extinct musical instrument in Japan, and koto concerts, as well as recorded koto music, are enduringly popular. Unlike the Western harpsichord or the lute, which may be heard in public performance but must still be considered archaic, the koto is a living instrument. And its rippling music is among the most memorable of distinctively Japanese sounds.

The ancient koto or *wagon,* as it is more accurately called, was perfected during the Heian period (794–1185). It had a sounding board of paulownia wood some six and a half feet long and five or six inches wide, six silk strings, and six movable bridges for tuning them. It was played with a plectrum. Undoubtedly it had been developed from a knowledge of the stringed instruments of China and Korea, but just which instruments is not clear, or how, or when. As early as the fifth century the Kudara-goto or Korean harp had been introduced into Japan along with Korean music, and an example of this instrument has fortunately been preserved in the Shoso-in, the eighth-century treasure house in Nara. It stands not quite five feet tall, has twenty-three strings, and was designed to be played in an upright position. In many respects it resembles the Western harp. Other versions of the Kudara-goto, one of which is similar to the *wagon,* appear in ancient paintings. The Korean instruments no doubt influenced the development of the *wagon,* but its direct ancestors appear to have been such Chinese versions of the harp as the bridgeless seven-stringed kin and the twenty-five-stringed shitsu, which was supplied with bridges for tuning and was played by using both hands to pluck the strings.

Although the origins of the *wagon* are vague, the reasons for its popularity are not. To begin with, it was part of the musical ensemble for Gagaku, the Japanese court music that represented a mélange of Chinese, Korean, and even Indian music in addition to a domestic element. Then, of course, the *wagon* was appealing in itself and readily worked its charms on the nobility, who took it up for solo performances. Its ability to create a number of moods made it a welcome adjunct to the aesthetic refinements of aristocratic Heian society, and it is small wonder that it appears repeatedly in *The Tale of Genji,* often in accompaniment to a love scene. Arthur Waley, in his celebrated translation of the novel, calls the *wagon* a zithern, and this is perhaps more accurate than thinking of it as a harp. In any event, here is a vignette from *Genji* in which an unseen lady is playing the *wagon* at night while a fascinated gentleman listens from outside her house. "Her zithern was tuned to the autumn-mode, and she played with so much tenderness and feeling that though the music came from behind closed shutters it sounded quite modern and passionate, and well accorded with the soft beauty of the moonlight. The courtier was ravished. . . ."

Eventually the *wagon* was supplied with more and more strings until the original six had become thirteen and the instrument became known as the *so* or, more popularly, the koto. This is the instrument of today, and it is played by plucking the strings of silk with plectrums attached to the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand, while the left hand modulates the strings or adjusts the tuning by moving the thirteen bridges. Traditionally the koto has been the favored instrument of the upper classes, and even today the ability to play it is considered a necessary accomplishment of the truly well-bred woman. At more plebeian levels the livelier music of the samisen (which in some ways resembles the banjo and has intimate associations with geisha entertainments and the Kabuki theater) is preferred, but the koto has by no means been relegated to the category of archaic instruments.

The rather lengthy commentary that goes with the illustration begins by mentioning the two types of koto in China, the kin and the shitsu, and then offers a description of the early koto in Japan. According to the Kojiki *(the ancient quasi-historical record of early Japan), the commentary says, the Heavenly Words Koto was owned by Oanamuchi no Mikoto (one of the innumerable gods of the Shinto pantheon), and, according to another antique record, the* wagon *had its beginnings when six bows were placed side by side and plucked. A third book is cited as the source of an old story about how another deity arranged these "heavenly smelling bows" and played them.*

From this the commentary goes on to describe the thirteen-stringed so, *explaining that it was first called a tsukushi-goto because some ninth-century Chinese visitors taught a Japanese girl to play it at Mount Tsukushihiko. To account for the thirteen strings, still another source is*

cited which claims that the number was arrived at by dividing twenty-five in half—an apparent reference to the twenty-five strings of the Chinese shitsu—and adding one half; that there were actually only twelve tones, since the thirteenth string was not used; and that the so thus also became known as the han-goto or "half" koto. This esoteric and perhaps farfetched explanation is followed by a concluding reference to a style of koto playing, the Hakko-ryu, which is said to have been taught by a Buddhist priest to a blind man named Hakko. With regard to this, it is of interest to note that blind koto players are by no means uncommon in Japan and that the late Miyagi Michio, the most famous of Japan's modern koto artists, was blind.

Here a koto maker is shown in animated conversation with a blind player of high rank—as denoted by his cap—who is seated in front of a tobacco tray, lighting his pipe. The artisan is finishing the sounding board of a koto, the frame for which is highly ornamented. It is interesting to note that there are only twelve holes for the strings, although the usual koto has thirteen strings. Next to the koto maker are two of his tools, a knife and a plane. The emblem on the left sleeve of his outer kimono is his family crest. In the past, as it does today on formal kimono, the crest appeared on each sleeve and on the back and sometimes additionally on the right and the left breast. The object lying in front of the blind koto player is his pipe case.

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面打

THE MASKMAKER

In the craft of maskmaking, the Japanese had the advantage of an early start. The oldest known masks in Japan date from the prehistoric Jomon period, which is roughly estimated to have extended from 5000 to 200 B.C. They are curious objects of clay, made in two sizes: a small mask minus facial openings, apparently designed to be worn on the forehead, and a large mask with perforations for eyes and mouth, obviously meant to be worn over the face. It seems fairly clear that the Jomon masks were used in religious rituals, and it is interesting to note that the holes for eyes and mouths are similar to those in the faces of the later haniwa, the mortuary figures of reddish clay that have become famous as examples of prehistoric Japanese pottery.

The mask forms of the historical tradition, however, did not appear in Japan until the introduction of continental dance and drama, of which they were an essential part. The first of the imported masked dramas appears to have been the Gigaku, which had originated in China and was brought to Japan by Koreans in the seventh century. Unfortunately it did not survive (although some of the masks did), and not much is known about it except that Gigaku dance-dramas were performed at Buddhist temples, that the masks were carved of wood and made quite large so that they could be worn over the head, and that they represented bird-headed figures, "mighty men," "drunken barbarians," and characters associated with a legendary Chinese king and his daughter. There is a notable collection of Gigaku masks at the Shoso-in in Nara.

Somewhat later in history, probably in the ninth century, another form of Chinese dance-drama found its way to Japan and became known there as Bugaku. It was performed at temples and shrines and before long was made an entertainment at the imperial court, where it was often staged along with the court music known as Gagaku. Like Gigaku, it called for the use of masks, but since it placed more emphasis on dance than on ceremonial posturing, the masks were smaller and lighter. They were made of carved (and sometimes lacquered) wood, and, because they were more symbolic than the rather literal masks of Gigaku, they covered a wide range of fantasy from the fierce to the humorous. Bugaku has had the good fortune to survive into the present day, for it has been preserved as a court entertainment to which the general public is admitted on special occasions.

But the finest and best known of Japanese masks are those of the Noh drama, the highly refined and subtle art form that evolved during the fifteenth century and has been preserved intact into the modern age. For its aesthetic and dramatic effect the Noh relies to a great extent upon the magically expressive masks worn by the performers. Somewhat smaller than the Bugaku masks, they are of carved and painted wood, and they cover a range of characters including innocent young women, heroic warriors, priests, tragic ladies, delightful old men, revengeful ghosts, and malevolent demons. In addition there are the comic masks of the Kyogen, the farcical interludes that relieve the seriousness of the standard Noh program. So skillfully are the Noh masks made that a complete change of mood or expression can be brought about by a slight tilt of the actor's head. Obviously mask artistry of this kind requires more of the maskmaker than a high technical ability. It also demands an intellectual understanding of the drama itself.

The use of masks in Japan is by no means limited to the classical dance and drama. Folk dances and festivals call for a variety of masked impersonations: sportive lions, frolicking monkeys, dragons, demons, country bumpkins, and amorous round-cheeked girls. Sometimes the masks are of wood, sometimes of cloth or paper, and sometimes even of plastic. Masks are also used as talismans, and in the heyday of the miniature sculptures known as netsuke (which have been described above under "The Engraver") they provided the carvers with an irresistible theme. Today, however, except in the production of masks for the theater, commercial makers have almost completely taken over from the traditional craftsmen.

The commentary written on the illustration is rather brief and throws little light on the history of the mask in Japan. It introduces a story that goes back to the reign of Empress Suiko, the "thirty-fourth mortal monarch," in the late sixth and early seventh century. At that time Prince Shotoku, one of the most important figures in Japanese cultural history, is reported to have "enshrined for the people the god of heaven and earth." This deity is not otherwise identified, but the story goes on to relate that the occasion was honored with a celebration, for which Prince Shotoku "commanded that thirty-six masks be made and that music be composed by Hatano Kawakatsu." The composer is not further identified either, but the story concludes with the observation that "it was from these efforts that the principles of new music were made and that Sarugaku came into being." And Sarugaku, it should be explained, was a direct ancestor of the Noh drama.

面（メン）

人皇
三十四代
推古天皇の
御宇
聖徳太子
和國安民の
ことに万物の
神を祭るまふ
此時三十六歳の

面を作りしも
秦河勝をして
楽を作らしめ
神事をおこしめ
しまふ其後
神樂（シンカク）の扁を
除き
楽哉器
しく
申楽の
起りといふ

Such a multitude of accomplishments have been reverently attributed to Prince Shotoku that little stock can be put in this tale about masks and music. Still, it is certain that masks were in use at the time, and it is quite possible that Shotoku, as a genuine cultural hero and as the promulgator of Buddhism in Japan, was in some way connected with the importation of Chinese forms of the drama and the dance.

The maker of Noh masks, seated on a floor cushion and holding a partially finished mask, is engaged in lively conversation with a gentleman who is obviously of the samurai class, since he has the privilege of wearing two swords. Quite possibly the two men are discussing some esoteric aspect of the Noh drama. Beside the artisan are his tools, which include a mallet and a variety of knives and chisels. His spectacles may at first seem to be an anachronism in this archaic setting, but of course the Portuguese and the Dutch had long since introduced this invention into Japan. Behind the maskmaker is a screen of the rigid tsuitate type, and next to him, atop a rather ornamental charcoal brazier, is an iron teakettle of traditional shape.

The samurai wears a formal costume on which his family crest is prominently displayed. At his side hangs a tobacco pouch, the cord for which is fastened to his belt with a netsuke. Gesturing with his folded fan, he seems to be making a point in the discussion.

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筆結

THE BRUSHMAKER

Insignificant though it may seem at first thought, the writing brush has played an indispensable part in the development of Japanese art and culture. Even today, when the fountain pen has largely taken over in the world of education and business, the fude or writing brush still maintains its pre-eminence in the writing of formal documents, in the practice of calligraphy, and, no less important, in the art of ink painting, for the same brush is used for all of these. And as long as calligraphy and ink painting continue to be counted among the accomplishments of cultured Japanese, the fude will be an honored implement.

Crude brushes were undoubtedly in use in ancient Japan, for tombs of the pre-Buddhist era were decorated with rough paintings, but it was not until after the soft, tapered Chinese brush was introduced along with Chinese writing around the fifth century that the fude truly became a cultural tool. It was not only a tool that enabled the Japanese to develop their own system of writing, to keep records, and to practice the literary arts but also one that opened the way for new forms of artistic expression in painting. Like the Chinese before them, the Japanese learned basic brushwork and composition by practicing the abstract forms of calligraphy, the mastery of which required control of the ink-charged brush and the understanding of balance and spatial relationships.

Physically, the fude is easily described. It is a slender bamboo tube with a tuft of carefully shaped hairs inserted and glued into one end. Hair or fur of small animals such as the badger, fox, rabbit, marten, or goat has traditionally been used for fude because it is strong and resilient and at the same time absorbent enough to hold the desired amount of ink or liquid pigment. The individual hairs are carefully selected, graded, and formed into a round bunch that tapers to a fine point, the stiffer hairs surrounding the softer ones. The number and the quality of the hairs used depend on the

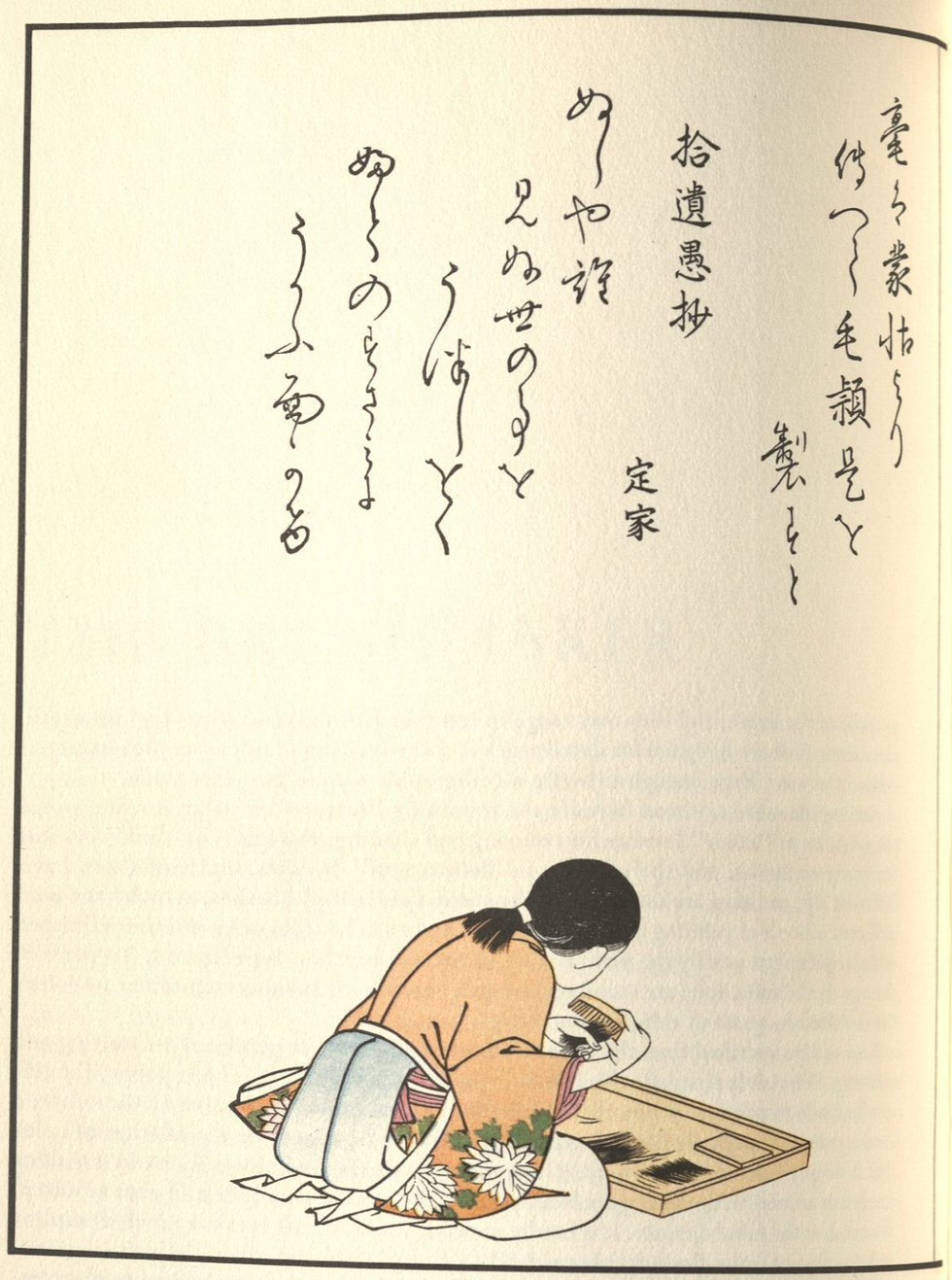
purpose of the brush, and they may range in number from several to several thousand, since some fude are designed for detail work and the writing of microscopic characters while others are large enough to write a calligraphic stroke two feet wide.

Among the more common fude are the menso or "feature" brushes for fine work, the saishoku or "color" brushes for coloring and shading, the kuma or "ink" brushes for heavy outlining, and the sakuyo or "delineation" brushes. Each of these has a different tip, and they are but a few of the many specialized brushes, which vary with different schools of painting and calligraphy. The brush handles are sometimes finished with lacquer, but usually the plain beauty of natural bamboo is preferred. To prevent damage to the tufts, fude are stood on end in a ceramic or bamboo container or sometimes rolled in a mat of thin bamboo strips.

Less easily described than the fude itself are the effects it produces in writing and painting. When it is charged with ink and applied to suitably absorbent paper, the tuft can be made to produce a line that is hair-fine at one end and massive at the other, a stroke that is unvaryingly flat and even or scratchy and ragged, or a gradation of color that is deeply black or subtly gray. These diverse effects are achieved not by swishing the brush around with the fingers but by using the whole shoulder and arm to direct the brush as the mind dictates. It is hardly necessary to add that it takes much discipline and practice to make the soft tuft respond to the writer's or the artist's satisfaction.

The making of fine fude is one Japanese craft that has not succumbed to modernization, and today the art of the brushmaker is carried on as in ages past. The scene and the costumes have changed, but the fude and the brushmaker's techniques have not.

The account of brushmaking supplied with the illustration is in two parts. The first part, with engaging honesty, admits that no one knows where, when, how, or by whom the first fude were



made but goes on to say that the fude was introduced into Japan from Mongolia and that the first Japanese brushmaker was a man named Moei. The second part of the account is a poem by the medieval poet Fujiwara no Teika from the collection Shuigusho. *Although it does not lend itself easily to translation, the following is one interpretation:*

Who are you?
Unseen worlds portrayed,
your image is made by the play of the brush.

Here the artist pictures a brushmaker and his assistant at work. The master appears to be testing the flexibility of a large-tufted fude with a lacquered handle. Before him are his tools and a vaselike holder containing finished fude. His assistant, a boy in a kimono decorated with chrysanthemums, is combing out hairs that will be formed into pointed tufts for the brushes. On the sign in the background a symbolic fude in exaggerated shape proclaims the business of the brushmaker. The characters on it read "Koboshi" or "Little Priest"—evidently the name of the shop. The signboard itself is in the form of the rigid entrance-hall screen known as tsuitate.

$8.95

土器師

THE POTTER

It is a curiosity of history that at one time the potters of Worcester and Delft and other European kilns manufactured copies of Japanese ceramics while their counterparts in Japan were making porcelains in imitation of Western designs. The reason for this odd development is not hard to discover, for porcelains were among the first of Japan's products to reach the West, where they were received with considerable excitement, and it was not long before they were being copied. At the same time, Western traders in Japan, capitalizing on the European (and later the American) enthusiasm for Japanese ceramics, encouraged the native potters to produce export wares in European style. It goes without saying that Japanese producers became very adept at the craft of making porcelains of Western design, and to this day they offer considerable competition to European producers of fine dinnerware, tea sets, and the like.

Unfortunately, perhaps, most of the early examples of Japanese ceramic art that reached the West were not genuinely expressive of Japanese style and taste. In a word, they tended to be gaudy, and it was some time before Europe and America came to realize that crackled Satsuma and overdecorated Imari, especially when made with Western buyers in mind, did not represent the finest of Japan's ceramic creations. Nor were the so-called Japanese tea sets of the Victorian age Japanese at all, for nothing of the sort had ever been used in Japan. Even today, it is only Western-style tea that the Japanese serve in handled cups with saucers. Their own green tea is drunk from cups without handles and, of course, is never served in teacups of Western style.

Japanese potters were already at work in prehistoric times. Their products were of two general types: the hand-fashioned and often grotesquely decorated ware known as Jomon or rope-pattern pottery, because of its characteristic motif, and the symmetrical and simply ornamented Yayoi pottery of rather later date, which appears to have been formed on a crude potter's wheel. These primitive wares represent a tradition of several thousand years that lay behind the first known organization of potters in Japan: the haji-be or "earthenware workers' guild" that made its appearance around the fifth century.

Korea and China, both with the benefit of longer experience in ceramic art, played important roles in the development of the Japanese potter's craft. Around the time that the potters' guild was formed, Korean wares were introduced into Japan, and it was not many years before the Chinese wares of the T'ang dynasty were inspiring Japanese craftsmen to new ventures, especially in copying the colored glazes of the T'ang pieces. In fact, both Chinese and Korean potters migrated to Japan in large numbers, and their contribution to the growth of a native ceramic tradition was of incalculable importance. Even as late as the sixteenth century, Korean potters were among the prizes of war brought back by Japanese invaders of their country.

China, of course, was the main source of ceramic inspiration, although its influence was often indirectly exerted through Korea. The technical superiority of Chinese wares naturally stimulated a desire among the Japanese to learn the fine points of Chinese craftsmanship, and Chinese ceramic designs were assiduously copied. Other aspects of China's cultural creativity also stimulated the Japanese potters. Incense burning and tea drinking, for example, called for artistic bowls, cups, and other containers. Tea drinking was particularly important in this respect because of its close association with Zen Buddhism and its emphasis on the austere and unassuming in the arts—an attitude that was strongly reflected in the wares of the tea ceremony. And it was the preference of the tea masters for dignified but unpretentious wares that set the tone for tea-ceremony objects and produced a new ceramic style in which the keynote was rude simplicity rather than the elegant finish typical of Chinese wares.

From the twelfth through the fifteenth century, it was the wares from the "six old kilns" of Bizen, Echizen, Seto, Shigaraki, Tamba, and Tokoname that dominated the Japanese ceramic scene. Between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries such wares as Shino, Oribe, Karatsu, and Raku became renowned. The seventeenth century also saw the first appearance of the true Japanese porcelains, among which the wares of Kutani and Arita, with their wide array of glazes and patterns, are the best known. Even though the Japanese were comparatively late in developing porcelains comparable to the best produced by their Chinese mentors, they eventually began to turn out wares that were second in quality and fame only to the masterpieces of Ming and Ch'ing.

During the feudal period, under the patronage of the dominant military class, a number of potters acquired higher social status—especially potters who created distinctive wares for the tea ceremony, since being a warrior by no means ruled out the practice of aesthetic refinements. An example of such social elevation can be seen in the sixteenth-century potter Sasaki Chojiro, a one-time maker of decorative tiles who turned his hand to the production of hand-modeled tea bowls and worked with the famous tea master Sen no Rikyu. Chojiro is credited with founding the Raku line of potters, who gained favor with such personages as the military dictator Toyotomi Hideyoshi. The great respect accorded Chojiro's creations was only to grow as time went on, and today his tea bowls are hardly less than priceless. In fact, ever since the first Westerners arrived in Japan in the sixteenth century, foreign visitors to that country have been astounded at the prices brought by such celebrated ceramic pieces, including even the most unpretentious-looking of tea bowls. It seems almost incredible, for example, that a famous tea caddy known as the Kitano Katatsuki should have been bought by the Mitsui family in 1922 for 159,000 yen, the equivalent in that day of more than 75,000 dollars. Today, of course, its value would be at least twice that amount—in the unlikely event that it might be offered for sale. Nothing speaks more clearly than this of the esteem in which the art of the potter is held in Japan.

The best of Japan's modern potters are treated with no less esteem than the masters of earlier days, and their creations command prices that reflect their high reputation. Their fame is not restricted to Japan, for their work has attracted excited attention in the West, and hundreds of potters from Europe and America have journeyed to Japan to study under them. It is, in fact, no exaggeration to say that the foremost Japanese potters of today have no equals in any other country of the world. And, like their predecessors of olden times, they are regarded not as mere craftsmen but as creators of true works of art.

The poetic description across the top of the illustration makes no effort to be historical. It tries, rather, to suggest that pottery making in Japan is an almost universal craft and, at the same time, to complement the mood created by the artist in picturing the potter at work in his cottage workshop. It is called simply "Pottery," and in English it says: "In the village of Fukakusa in Higashiyama in Kyoto there seem to be many potters making fine wares. / The lonely sound of

the potter's wheel can be heard creaking / in Minowa, near Edo, and there too the potter's craft is faintly plied. / One morning after a rain newly turned pots were steaming row on row / on the south side of a rustic cottage surrounded by a fence / of slender bamboo poles. The lilting voice of a nightingale / broke through the stillness with an effect somehow profound."

There is a hint in the poem that Kyoto potters excel all others in craftsmanship, and indeed this was true when the poem was written. Today, however, fine pottery is produced in other districts as well, even though Kyoto still upholds the traditions of superb craftsmanship.

With his sleeves tied back and his firm-muscled arms bared, an ordinary potter sits cross-legged on a straw mat, turning his wheel by hand to shape the piece he is making. Lying in front of him is the string he uses to cut newly formed wares cleanly from the wheel by looping it around the base of each object and pulling it taut. Molded figurines and dishes fresh from his wheel have been placed on boards to dry slightly before they are fired in the kiln.

The potter's wife, in a kimono somewhat too glamorized for the work she is doing, carries a basket filled with lumps of kneaded clay ready for his use. Her large feet and thick arms suggest the plebeian level of her occupation. Her young son, with the shaved head and red kimono typical of small boys of the time, is evidently doing his best to help with the heavy load of clay.

$8.95

THE MAKER OF STRAW MATS

"A wife and floor mats, the newer the better," says a Japanese proverb. While the saying hardly spares the modesty of the young bride or flatters the wife of longer standing, it expresses perfectly the peculiar delight of being in a room furnished with new tatami, the reed-and-straw mats upon which the Japanese have lived, worked, played, and slept for centuries. The delight is purely a sensual one, and it is inspired by the indescribably fresh and clean smell of the tatami, the enticing color of their surface, and their smooth and resilient texture. Small wonder that the Japanese should draw a parallel between new tatami and a new wife.

Actually, of course, tatami are prosaic enough in their everyday utilitarian role, even though they undeniably add beauty to the Japanese interior. They are made of three parts: the toko or thickly wadded straw matting that is laced together with hemp twine to form the base, the tatami-omote or covering made of thin rushes sewn together with hidden stitches, and the fushi or cloth binding sewn along the longer sides. This construction has remained unchanged throughout their history, although the size of the individual tatami varies from district to district. In general, however, it is roughly six feet long, three feet wide, and two inches thick. The materials used for the covering and the binding may differ according to locality and taste, and in fact the binding is sometimes omitted entirely, but essentially tatami are the same everywhere in Japan. For this reason they have served for some centuries as a unit of measurement used by Japanese carpenters in constructing the traditional Japanese house, and the size of a room is given in terms of the number of tatami that make up its floor space. Consequently, instead of speaking of the living room, the bedroom, the guest room, and so forth, it is much more common to speak of the ten-mat room, the six-mat room, and the like. Again, since a room in an average Japanese home serves a number of purposes during the course of the day—for example, dining room at mealtime, living room in the evening, bedroom at night—it is impossible to label it according to any single role.

Despite the almost universal use of tatami in the traditional-style Japanese homes of today, they were not always used to cover entire floors, mainly because they were quite expensive. In the early days of wooden raised-floor architecture, it became the custom to use straw cushions or wadded mats, known as okidatami, for sitting and to use another type of matting, called shikidatami, for sleeping. The rest of the floor was left bare or, in more affluent homes, covered only with the thin rush matting called goza. Around the middle of the sixteenth century tatami began to be used increasingly as coverings for entire floors, but only by people who could afford to be extravagant. Professional tatami makers were certainly at work as early as the Muromachi period (1392–1568), for they are included in a picture scroll of that time portraying the activities of contemporary artisans.

As time passed, tatami became a commonplace of interior decoration, although for the poor farmers who produced the materials to make them they remained something of a luxury. The extent to which tatami were used is indicated by an order from the shogun in 1622 for 9,000 reed coverings for mats in his castle. Today, of course, the use of tatami is almost universal in Japan, and even the most modern dwellings and apartments, for all their being basically Western in style, often contain at least one tatami-floored room.

The account inscribed on the illustration devotes itself entirely to cataloguing the sizes of tatami used at different social levels and in different regions of Japan. The catalogue is not complete, and for some reason it says nothing about the width of the mats (which also varied), but it has its points of interest nevertheless. It begins by noting that the tatami used by the emperor—that is, the imperial household—were seven feet long and two and a half inches thick. Just when this was, we are not told, but the following sentences, by mentioning the custom of religious retirement among members of the imperial family, suggest that it was in the Heian period. Retired emperors and empresses who became monks or nuns, the account goes on, were allowed mats six feet seven inches long and two and one-eighth inches thick. Ministers of the top three grades also had the honor of using mats of this size. The account explains that this was the size of mat used in the temples of Mount Koya and Mount Yoshino, both of which were favorite places of retirement for members of the imperial family.

畳（タヽミ）

本朝式云掃部寮（カモ）

長畳短畳（トテ）

禁裡御畳（ハ）

長 七尺 厚二寸二分

三公及（ヒ）門跡（ハ）

長 六尺六寸 厚一寸八分

吉野高野兩山亦用之

故呼曰高野間（ト）

畿内民家（ハ）

長 六尺三寸 厚一寸七分

謂之京間（ト）

関東民家（ハ）

長 五尺八寸 厚一寸六分

謂之田舎間（ト）

The people of the Kinki area, which includes Kyoto and Nara, made their mats six feet three and a half inches long and two inches thick, we are told, while the inhabitants of Edo and the surrounding Kanto region (we are in the seventeenth century now) took to using mats five feet nine and a half inches long and seven-eighths of an inch thick, which were known as "country mats." This appellation, although the account does not say so, sounds suspiciously like an invention of the people of Kyoto, for it clearly expresses the traditional Kyoto attitude of superiority toward the upstart culture of Edo. In any case, then as today, the size of the tatami varied from region to region.

The matmaker, somewhat too gorgeously attired for his job, is shown stitching the patterned binding cloth along the edge of a newly woven tatami. By holding the cloth in place and gaining leverage with his elbow, he is able to push his large needle through the mat and make a tight, even stitch. The technique, still used today, results in a large callus on the elbow. The pins stuck into the mat are used to hold the dampened reed covering in place so that it will stretch taut. An awl, a large knife, and a bundle of cord are also part of the matmaker's equipment. His tools and his techniques, with no significant changes, are those of the tatami maker of today, who works in the same enduring tradition of fine craftsmanship.

$8.95

轆轤細工

THE WOODWORKER

Wood, which might almost be called the soul of Japanese architecture and sculpture, has been put to such a universality of other uses in Japan that it would hardly be less than futile to try to name all of them. Even in its most commonplace uses, however, it has always been employed with an artistry that bespeaks a love of the material itself. To realize the truth of this, one has only to think of such everyday items as the small stools and buckets used in the bath, the assortment of dippers, paddles, and trays found in the kitchen, and the boxes made to hold gifts. Again, considering the indispensability of wood to the whole Japanese tradition of art and craftsmanship, one thinks of such creations as the woodblock prints of the Edo period (as well as those of the modern age), the masks of the Noh drama, and the whole range of wood-based lacquer ware.

Of the many woodworking techniques employed in Japan, lathework appears to have been introduced comparatively late in history. Although lathes may have been brought into the country before the period of strict seclusion that began in the early seventeenth century, it seems more likely that the Japanese lathe was a development from the turntables or potters' wheels that had been in use since ancient times. In this connection it is of interest to observe that the Japanese word for lathe, *rokuro,* is the same as that for potter's wheel. It is also true that the best lathework in Japan was always done in Edo and the areas to the north, where there is a greater abundance of hardwood, and it can therefore be surmised that the lathe made a relatively late appearance on the scene, since these areas were not much developed until after the sixteenth century.

The lathes pictured in old paintings and prints—for example, the one seen in the following illustration of the woodworker—were rather crude hand-operated machines, but they were effective nevertheless, and a surprising variety of decorative and useful objects were shaped on their rotating shafts, including chopsticks, cups and bowls for wood-based lacquer ware, trays, and children's toys. Of the toys, undoubtedly the best known are the traditional kokeshi dolls: roundheaded cylindrical figures in a multitude of sizes and styles. Preferred woods for lathework were cherry, plum, holly, and a special kind of cedar known as jindai sugi, a rare type generally unearthed near the seashore or in the mountains after having been buried for decades or even centuries. Such wood, although not petrified, was much harder than the ordinary hardwoods and had an interesting greenish-black color.

The latheworking craft was encouraged by local feudal lords who attempted to introduce various industries into their domains in order to increase their own wealth and offset the financial drain occasioned by government policies aimed at keeping the lords from becoming too rich or powerful. Modernization and the introduction of Western machinery, of course, changed the industry completely. A few artisans, particularly those who make kokeshi dolls, still work as individual producers, but even their machinery is of modern style, and the lathes of olden times are to be seen only in museums.

According to the commentary on the print, the origins of lathework in Japan are unknown, but a description of one of the most famous latheworking localities is given. This area, the commentary says, is in the mountains of Hakone and is called Nana Onsen (Seven Spas) after the hot springs there. It is especially noted for the beautiful hairpin boxes made by its craftsmen. Several types of wood used in lathework are then named: enju (pagoda tree), plum, cherry, and the above-noted special cedar known as jindai sugi. In the big city of Edo, the commentary continues, lathework came to be called yumoto zaiku (hot-springs craftsmanship), which indicates either that the craft was introduced from the hot-springs area of Hakone or that the craftsmen

轆轤（ロクロ）

of Edo tried to take advantage of the popularity of the Hakone craftsmen's products. The commentary ends by stating that objects made on the lathe ranged from "stationery utensils to things for the kitchen and interior objects," that "anything could be made," and that the artisans were known as hikimonoshi—that is, makers of lathework.

The old-time craftsman, wearing a rather too elegant kimono for the task, is shown hollowing out the inside of a bowl. He uses a wooden support to control the cutting. In front of him are a number of his tools and some of his lathe-turned creations, including several that may be children's tops. His spectacles are a fairly modern innovation introduced by European visitors to Japan in the sixteenth century. At his side hangs a rather pretentious tobacco pouch which is attached to his obi with a matching netsuke.

The lathe, which is spiked to the floor, is operated by the artisan's assistant, who rotates it by pulling alternately on the ends of the long leather belt wrapped around the shaft. It is hardly more than a primitive device, yet it enables the artisan to work with remarkable precision.

It is typical of the artist to have added a touch of humor in the small boy, who is distracting the assistant from his work by trying to play with him. Undoubtedly he is the woodworker's son. His mother wears a kimono in a striped pattern that was extremely popular at the time.

$8.95

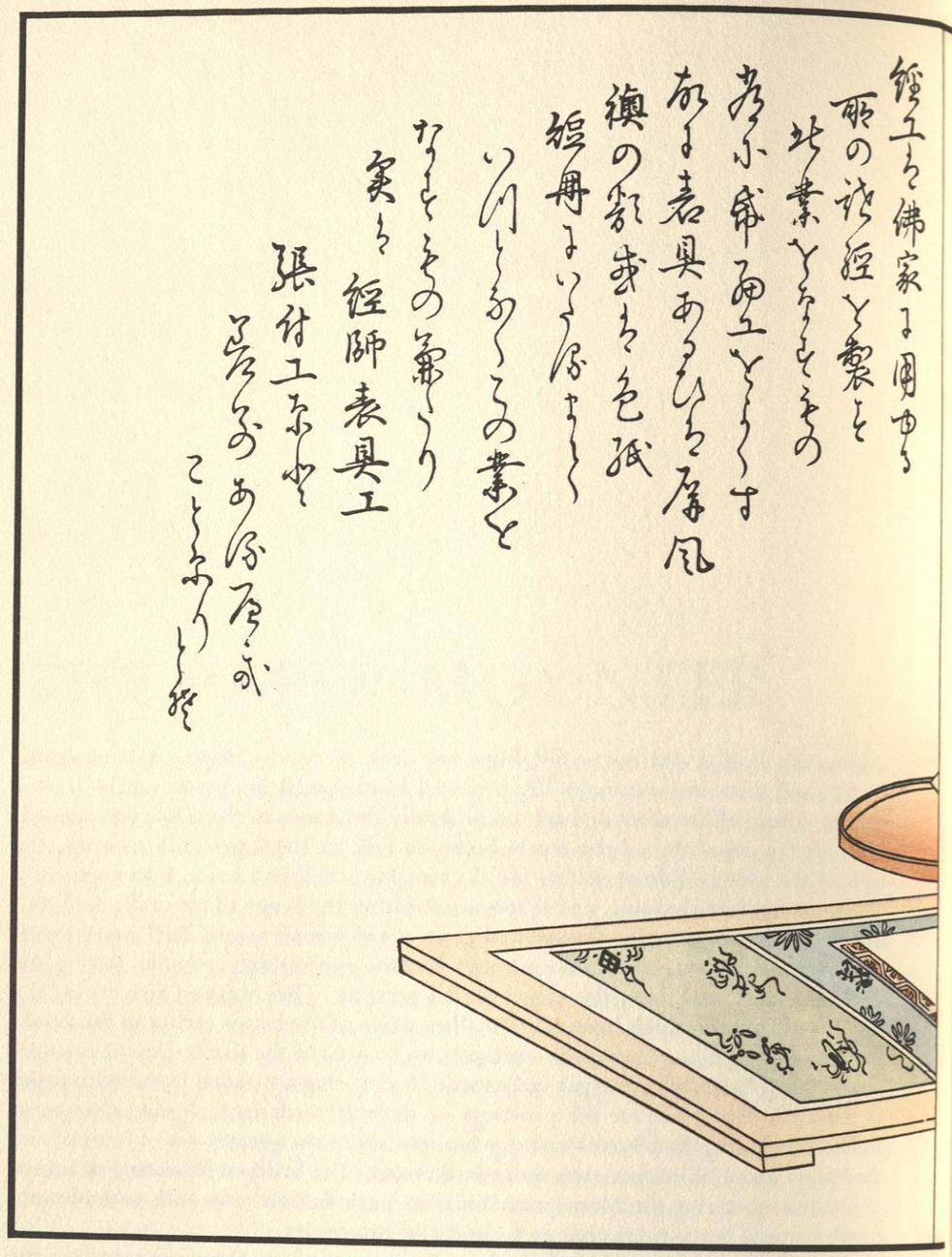
經師 THE PAPER MOUNTER

No Westerner who has ever entered a traditional Japanese-style house has failed to be interested in the fusuma, the sliding paper-covered doors that serve as walls and partitions and can be readily removed to enlarge the size of a room. Nor has he neglected to note the outstanding and almost sole decorative feature of the principal room: the kakejiku or hanging scroll that occupies the back wall of the tokonoma or alcove. Both of these essential elements of the traditional Japanese interior—the fusuma and the kakejiku (or kakemono, as it is also called)—involve the work of a specialized craftsman, the kyojiya or paper mounter. From olden times his occupation has included such tasks as covering the fusuma with decorative paper, preparing and mounting scrolls (both the hanging type and the pictorial hand scroll), and producing the mounted square and oblong sheets of heavy paper used by calligraphers and ink painters. Like the papermaker, who appears earlier in this book, the kyojiya has long played a prominent role among the artisans of Japan.

Oddly enough, the kyojiya and his craft appear to have originated with the early Japanese scribes. The guild of scribes came into existence in the sixth century, following the adoption of Buddhism and the introduction of Chinese writing and learning, and one of its main tasks was the transcribing of sacred texts (sutras) for the countless temples that were then springing up throughout the length and breadth of Japan. Because of the great importance attached to the sutra scrolls they naturally received special treatment that included careful mounting, and it appears that this task fell to the scribes who were particularly skillful with their hands. These men came to be known as kyojiya—literally, "makers of sutras"—and thus the craft of the paper mounter was born.

The early kyojiya did not suffer from any lack of work. During the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries the pictorial hand scrolls known as emaki were a favorite vehicle of literature and art, and literally thousands of them were produced. Although the popularity of the emaki began to fade in the fourteenth century, the trade of the kyojiya did not suffer, for the hanging scroll had come into vogue as a decoration for the tokonoma, and it too came within the scope of his craft. And, unlike the emaki, it has never disappeared from the domestic scene. Still more fortunately for the kyojiya, decorative screens became increasingly popular during the fifteenth century, and these also called for his services. They were of two types: the rigid tsuitate (one of which appears in the illustration of the hatter earlier in this book) and the folding byobu (of which an example can be seen in the illustration of the mirror polisher). Basically both types were made by covering a wooden frame with paper to provide a display surface for paintings or decorative designs. Again, changes in architecture during the fifteenth century brought about the greater use of fusuma, and the kyojiya found his talents even more in demand. The brilliant flowering of screen and fusuma art during the Momoyama and Edo periods (late sixteenth to mid-nineteenth century) brought his craft to a climax of prosperity.

Although the kyojiya seldom lacked work in premodern times, the passion for Westernization that swept over Japan during the last decades of the nineteenth century brought about a decline in his craft. New ideas in architecture and interior decoration resulted in a decreased demand for the kyojiya's services, but the craft has by no means died out. Nor will it disappear entirely as long as traditional Japanese architecture and interior decoration survive.



The commentary inscribed on the illustration begins by noting that the kyojiya (or kyoshi, as they were also called) were originally makers of sutra scrolls. It goes on to observe that they became adept at handling paper and gradually developed into the craftsmen who mounted paintings, covered screens and sliding doors with paper, and made square and oblong sheets of heavy paper for calligraphy and ink painting. The commentary concludes by mentioning that these various craftsmen, instead of being lumped together under the single heading of kyojiya, should be placed in distinct categories according to the specific type of work they do. Evidently such distinctions were more important in the heyday of the kyojiya's craft than they are today.

Here the kyojiya is seen applying the final touches to a scroll before attaching the wooden rollers at each end. The ink painting, furnished with a brocade border at top and bottom, is mounted on an expanse of decorative cloth (or paper), and this, in turn, is pasted to a backing sheet, also with a decorative design. In the right foreground are a ruler and several cutting and flattening tools. The kyojiya is dipping a wide pastebrush into a tray holding the thin, watery paste used in his trade. The flat surface of the mounting board is planed smooth so that all wrinkles can be easily worked out of the layers of cloth and paper. In the right background are two paintings in the sumi-e (black ink) style, the larger of them portraying a dragon.

$8.95

賀留多屋

THE CARDMAKER

The enticements of gambling are no less irresistible to the Japanese than they are to people everywhere else in the world. It is only the games of chance that differ in Japan, and it is interesting to note that the Japanese in general have never seriously taken up the card games of the West, even though they were introduced to them some centuries ago. In Japan, mah jong is in no danger of being replaced by poker, nor are the fascinations of bridge ever likely to win out over those of go and shogi, which in certain ways resemble checkers and chess. Why, then, one may ask, should there ever have been cardmakers in Japan, and what were their products used for?

The answer, of course, is that Japan has its own card games, although in most cases they are for pure amusement rather than for gambling. To be sure, gambling with cards became a form of entertainment among the Japanese soon after the Portuguese, and then the Dutch, brought playing cards to Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In fact, the very Japanese word for cards, *karuta,* came from the Portuguese *carta,* and the card games of the "southern barbarians," as the Western visitors came to be called, were an object of intense curiosity among the Japanese. Painters of the time, in recording the arrival and activities of these odd invaders from the outside world, frequently included a view of them engaged in a session of cards. Nor was it long before their cards and their games were being copied. The cards, appropriately enough, were adorned with pictures of "southern barbarians" or Japanese gods of fortune, depending upon whether they were intended to be "foreign style" or "Japanese style." Quite naturally, the games also underwent a change into Japanese versions. One of these, because of its popularity during the Tensho era of 1573–91, became known as Tensho karuta. It was played like trumps and called for a deck of forty-eight cards in four suits of twelve each. Another game of Portuguese inspiration was unsun karuta, which appears to have been introduced early in the Edo period (perhaps around 1605) and was played with seventy-five cards. There was also a native card game called hana-garuta (flower cards) in which forty-eight cards in twelve suits were used. It is hardly necessary to add that the cardmakers of the time were probably kept busy.

Nevertheless, gambling with cards did not become a general addiction among the Japanese, and even today only the most sophisticated and Westernized of them indulge in bridge and poker. It is worth noting, however, that there are enough players of such games in Japan to warrant the manufacture of standard fifty-two card decks in Western style.

At the same time, several traditional Japanese card games, played purely for amusement, have survived from olden times. One of these is uta-garuta (poem cards), which might be described as a Japanese version of the Western game of "authors." Uta-garuta is generally played at New Year's and involves the matching of lines from the celebrated anthology of poetry, *Hyakunin Isshu* (One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets). It is hardly an exaggeration to say that this game has made practically every literate Japanese capable of reciting the anthology from memory. In any event, no other classical anthology of Japanese poetry (and there are a number of them) is anywhere near so widely known.

Another of the traditional card games is a children's game known as iroha karuta, which can perhaps best be translated as "alphabet cards." It takes its name from the first three characters of the Japanese phonetic syllabary and is concerned with the memorizing of proverbs beginning with the various characters of the syllabary. Still another children's card game calls for combining the characters of the syllabary to make complete words.

Regardless of the continuing demand for playing cards of one sort or another, the old-time craft of the cardmaker has all but vanished. Machinery has long since taken over, and it is only a few of the traditional cards—for instance, those for the game of hana-garuta—that are still sometimes made by hand today.

The commentary accompanying the print begins by reporting that the Dutchmen who came to Japan in the early seventeenth century played card games and that they "were imitated by the townspeople"—evidently the people of Nagasaki, since this is where the Dutchmen arrived—around the Kan'ei era of 1624–43. Noting that the cards made during that period were different from "modern" ones, the commentary goes on to point out that "modern cards are made with black backs and white faces and are decorated with pictures in the blue called han, the red called ise, the circular pattern called oru, and the semicircular pattern called kopu." These colors and designs apparently indicated suits, for it is next explained that "there are twelve cards for each, making forty-eight all together." This is followed by the interesting but not exactly enlightening information—at least as far as the game itself is concerned—that "the number one

cards are decorated with pictures of insects and called zumu, the cards from two through nine with varied patterns indicating their value, ten with a picture of a priest, eleven with a picture of a warhorse, and twelve with a picture of a warrior." Then, without divulging the name of the intriguing pastime in which these cards were used, the commentary ends by observing that "there are other types of card games, such as kau and unsun, all designated by foreign words."

Two artisans are at work in the cardmaker's shop, and two steps in the craft of cardmaking are shown. The artist, who is adding touches of red to an uncut sheet of black-and-white cards, seems to be less than enthusiastic about his task. The other craftsman, who is running individual cards through a calendering device to give them a smooth finish, hardly appears animated either. But of course their work could scarcely be called exciting. It would appear from the sheet of cards on which the artist is working, as well as from the uncolored sheets beside the table, that the black designs were done by woodblock printing, but there is no certainty of this. In any event, the artist appears to be using only red paint to decorate the cards.

The calendering device is simple but interesting. The artisan operates it by applying pressure with his foot to bring the counterbalance into play as he cranks the cards through and lets them fall into a bamboo basket.

$8.95

傘張

THE MAKER OF PAPER UMBRELLAS

On rainy days the visitor to a Japanese country inn or a hot-springs resort is likely to be offered the use of a kara-kasa, an old-style umbrella of bamboo and oiled paper, but on the streets of large cities he will be lucky if he even catches a glimpse of this survivor from traditional days. The reason, of course, is that the Western-style umbrella has all but supplanted the kara-kasa. In the Kabuki, in the dance, and at certain inns and restaurants (where it performs the additional function of advertising by being embellished with the name or trademark of the establishment) it is still much in use. But these are exceptions, and the average Japanese has come to prefer the lighter and more easily handled umbrella of metal and cloth.

No matter how suggestive of old Japan the kara-kasa may be, it appears not to have been a Japanese invention. The available evidence indicates that the earliest folding umbrellas were seventh- or eighth-century imports from China or Korea, where they had served as symbols of honor and authority. They were constructed of split bamboo and covered with silk or heavy paper. The handle was a bamboo rod. The twelfth-century *Tale of Genji Picture Scroll,* based on Murasaki's famous novel, shows the descendants of these early Chinese or Korean umbrellas, still rather large and bulky but already displaying a Japanese touch in their graceful domelike tops. Umbrellas of this type were used mainly by the upper class and were, in fact, symbols of status, as they had been in China and Korea.

Sometime around the end of the sixteenth century a new type of umbrella came into use. It still resembled its continental ancestor, but it was smaller and lighter and much easier to handle. The bamboo frame, covered with oiled paper, opened into a flatter and rather conical top, which was often decorated with bands of color or the trademark of some business establishment. It was this umbrella that went by the name of kara-kasa—literally, "Chinese umbrella"—and it became extremely popular during the Edo period, the two and a half centuries that preceded Japan's entry into the modern world.

The parasol, called higasa (sun umbrella), was particularly favored by ladies and old men, although a sarcastic Japanese expression for pampered young men—omba higasa zoku (nursemaid-and-parasol tribe)—indicates that it was also used to protect the pale-skinned sons of the wealthy from sunburn. On the other hand, in the celebrated Kabuki drama *Sukeroku,* the umbrella becomes a symbol of vigorous masculinity as the hero flourishes it in his entry dance on the runway to the stage.

The kara-kasa and the higasa by no means represented the limit of umbrella types in old Japan. There were also the specifically designated amagasa (rain umbrellas) and the ryoten (double purpose), the latter of which usually went by the more poetic name of terifuri (shine-rain). In the Kabuki, still other types came to be used, including the transparent flower-decorated parasols carried by the frolicking priests in *The Dancing Girl at Dojo Temple,* the solid-red parasol held over the heads of persons of state, and the incredibly delicate black one—almost like the ghost of a parasol—that the bewitched girl uses in her dance in *The Heron Maiden*. Inevitably, in the Kabuki as well as in the modern drama, the kara-kasa figures as a symbol of romance, and a man and a woman sharing an umbrella are immediately identified as lovers.

Again, the umbrella has its place in a number of popular expressions. In addition to the contemptuous "nursemaid-and-parasol tribe" noted above, there is the amusing kara-kasa ippon (Chinese umbrella, one), an epithet applied to a defrocked priest, who was allowed to take only an umbrella with him when he was thrown out of his temple. There is also a Japanese saying that at night or at a distance a woman always looks more glamorous under a kara-kasa.

The Western-style umbrella, when it made its appearance in Japan, naturally excited admiration because it was foreign, since the Japanese passion for foreign things was hardly less extravagant then than it is today. Technically, it was a yogasa (Western umbrella), but its sober black and the extraordinary scalloped shape of its edges quickly put the Japanese imagination to work, with the result that it came to be known as komori: the bat.

The brief, sketchy, and rather dubious account accompanying the print begins by attributing the invention of the umbrella to a ruler of the ancient Chinese kingdom of Wei whom the Japanese call Jingen. This statement is followed by a short poem about rain, and the account continues with a story about a Japanese merchant named Naya Sukezaemon, from the city of Sakai, who returned from a voyage to the Philippines in the third year of the Bunroku era (1592–95) "bringing with him one thousand candles and one thousand umbrellas as a gift." And, the account concludes, the kara-kasa in use in Japan at the time the artist made his print were of the type brought back by this merchant from Sakai.

While there is no reason to doubt that Naya Sukezaemon made a voyage to the Philippines in the late sixteenth century (this was before the period of national seclusion that began in Japan

early in the seventeenth century), it seems rather strange that he should have brought back a thousand umbrellas to the very country that specialized in making this commodity. Certainly the umbrellas were not of native Philippine manufacture. One possible explanation is that they were Chinese products, for it is known that Chinese traders were active in Philippine ports even before the arrival of the Portuguese and Spanish explorers in the Far East in the early sixteenth century. It is also possible that these umbrellas were of a different type from those being made in Japan, and this would seem to fit in with the artist's explanation that the kara-kasa in use in the late eighteenth century were of this type. Still, the story has a dubious flavor.

The umbrella maker, wearing a kimono decorated with medallions that resemble the designs of traditional family crests, is seen applying paste to the bamboo ribs of the umbrella top before fitting on the next section of heavy paper. In addition to his pastebrush, his tools and materials include a knife, a spatula, several packets of paper, and a ball of twine. A tripod of bamboo supports the umbrella while he works on it.

Strips of rattan were often wrapped around the base of the handle to provide a firmer grip. The tip of the handle and the part just under the top were usually wrapped tightly with twine, which was then covered with black-lacquered paper to give a decorative finish.

$8.95

THE MAKER OF MILLSTONES

No less in Japan than in the West there is a tendency for common utensils and tools of the past to be replaced by others of greater efficiency and to vanish from the everyday scene. The wooden potato masher and the wire eggbeater give way to the electric mixer; the fire-heated iron and its trivet are superseded by the electric iron with its built-in stand; and, in Japan, the ceramic plate used to catch the drippings from an oil lamp disappears completely. And when these archaic devices have a beauty and charm of their own—for instance, the Japanese umbrella that we have previously noted—their passing seems somehow regrettable, even though some of them may survive as curios. Such a device is the hikiusu, the Japanese hand-operated mill.

Small household mills were a common feature of Japanese life until fairly recent years. There was no need for large water-powered mills to produce flour because Japan was not a bread-consuming country, and what flour was needed for noodles, dumplings, and cakes could easily be made at home or at the shops where such items were sold. In any case, flour was not produced in large quantities as in the West, at least not until the modern age began.

According to historical records, it was a Korean priest who taught the Japanese how to make millstones. This instruction was reportedly given in the seventh century, and from that time on, it seems, little or no change took place either in the making or in the operation of hand mills. The average mill was about one foot in diameter and consisted of two cylindrical stones, each about five or six inches thick. Each stone had a hole in the center of its grinding surface to receive a peg, which served as the axis around which the upper stone was rotated. Each stone also had serrations on its grinding surface arranged in a pattern that not only facilitated grinding but also allowed the flour to run out to the edge of the lower stone, where it could be collected. The upper stone, which was rotated by means of a vertical handle fastened to its edge, had a hole drilled through it to receive the grain.

In shops that made noodles and other products calling for flour, larger mills were used, some requiring as many as three men to operate them. Although the output was greater, the process was no less laborious. The task of grinding flour in old Japan, whether in household or in shop, was a long and tedious one.

No less long and tedious was the making of the millstones themselves. Granite, especially the type found at Mikage, a place near Osaka, was the preferred material, and much time and labor was consumed in quarrying and transporting it, to say nothing of cutting it into the proper cylindrical shape and carving the serrations on the grinding surfaces. But the advent of Westernization in Japan and the establishment of modern flour mills rather suddenly brought an end to all of this, and the old craft of making millstones disappeared.

The illustration commentary opens with the statement, written in classical-style Japanese, that the origin of millstones is mentioned in the Nihongi, *Japan's second oldest historical record,*

where it is related that the Korean priest Doncho came to Japan and made millstones in the eighteenth year of Empress Suiko's reign (early seventh century). Although the commentary does not say so, this is the same Doncho who is credited with introducing the Chinese technique of papermaking into Japan. And even today (that is, in the eighteenth century), the commentary continues, millstones are still made in the same fashion. It concludes by citing the granite of Mikage in Sesshu (near the present Osaka) as the finest for millstones.

The rough-looking millstone cutter is shown pausing in his work to get a light for his pipe from a "lion dancer" who has evidently been taking part in a festival. Seated on a straw mat, the artisan rests his chisel on the serrated surface of the base stone, which has an iron peg in the center to serve as an axis for rotating the upper stone. Next to the base stone is the upper grinding stone, with a hole for pouring in the grain and a handle bound firmly to it with straw rope.

The lion dancer, seated on a block of stone, has pushed back his mask and its attached hood. At his waist is a small drum, the sticks for which are thrust through his obi along with a sword. His tight white trousers, although they may look like winter underwear, are a proper part of his costume. Such trousers, called momohiki, were commonly worn by artisans, firemen, street entertainers, and other plebeian types during the Edo period.

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針師 THE NEEDLEMAKER

Foreigners seeking the quaint in Japan are always delighted to learn of the annual Buddhist mass for broken needles—the hari kuyo, as the Japanese call it. This venerable custom, still observed in households, girls' schools, dressmaking shops, and the like, is traced back to very early times. Its purpose is to honor the memory and to comfort the souls of the needles sacrificed on the altar of the tailor's and the dressmaker's art. From the tradition that the custom originated in the days of Emperor Nintoku, in the fourth century, it is possible to deduce that metal needles were in use in Japan at that time. For the historian such a deduction has considerable significance, and certainly the early advent of the needle in Japan was of great importance to the history of Japanese costume, but there is a peculiarly Japanese charm in the idea that such a humble object should have been invested with a soul.

The earliest needles in Japan, as might be expected, were used for sewing leather and cloth, but by the Asuka period (552–645) they had also come to be used for embroidery, an art at which the Japanese became more and more adept as the centuries went by, bringing it to a climax in the ornate kimono and obi of the Edo period. One of the national art treasures of Japan is the Tenjukoku Mandara, an embroidered religious picture produced in the seventh century in memory of the illustrious Prince Shotoku, who is generally regarded as the father of Japanese Buddhism.

But needles for sewing and embroidery were not the only ones used in old Japan. There were also needles for tattooing and for the interesting medical practice of acupuncture, both of which became popular in the Edo period and, in fact, still survive today. Tattooing was extremely elaborate and often covered almost the whole body with an intricate complex of designs. It was also a painful and rather dangerous process, and sometimes the artistic-minded person who submitted himself to it did not live to enjoy the results. Acupuncture, another import from China, involved perforating different parts of the body with various-sized needles of gold, silver, steel, and sometimes stone in an effort to relieve the pain of such ailments as lumbago, neuralgia, and toothache. These needles sometimes penetrated the flesh to a depth of two and a half inches and were worked up and down as many as a dozen times, depending upon the endurance of the patient. Barbarous though the treatment may sound, in the hands of an expert it was efficacious, and it is worth noting that acupuncture was one of the two traditional Japanese medical practices sanctioned by American officials during the reforms that followed the end of the Pacific War in 1945. (The other was moxabustion or moxacautery, a similar practice in which a powdered herb was burned on the surface of the skin to relieve pain.) In a word, acupuncture has an honorable history both in China and in Japan and is still resorted to by a number of courageous people.

Until Western machines and techniques were introduced, all types of Japanese needles were made by hand in a rather laborious process that consisted of rolling wire on a whetstone to produce a sharp point. For sewing needles, the eyes were bored straight through without lead-in grooves like those found in Western needles. Today, of course, all needles are machine-made, and the old-time needlemaker has disappeared from the scene.

The explanation on the print begins with a somewhat difficult etymology for the word mononuibari (sewing needle) taken from a venerable Chinese book. It then goes on to state that needles were first used in Japan in the third century A.D., *when two women from Korea displayed their*

skill at sewing. To this is added the information that the most famous needlemaking shop in Japan was the Suirenya in Kyoto and that a set of fifty needles went by the name of ippiki. (We are not told why this latter fact was considered important enough to record.) The explanation ends with the curious report, taken from another old book, that "Daiten made nine needles, and it was after this that sewing needles began to be manufactured." We are not enlightened as to who Daiten was, but it is safe to say that posterity was grateful to him.

Apparently the contributor of this odd assortment of information (one of the artist's friends, as we have noted earlier) had difficulty in finding interesting things to say about needles and needlemakers. Nevertheless, it is quite likely that the Edo-period audience for the book was properly edified by his comments. In any event, his explanation is only an embellishment to the artist's work, and it is the picture itself that really commands attention.

The needlemaker, stripped to the waist, is grinding down the points of needles on a large whetstone, beside which is an open packet of a dozen needles. At the left the needlemaker's wife, costumed in a kimono patterned with iris flowers, inspects the finished products before placing them in packets to be offered for sale. The sign, in the form of a rigid tsuitate screen, proclaims the business of the shop.

The legend on the print begins by citing an old book in which the first inkstone is described as having been made from a "jewel" (possibly jade) by a Chinese inventor. But the Chinese, continues the legend—perhaps with a tinge of sarcasm—used mostly clay tile for their inkstones. Then, quoting an opinion from another old book, it notes that tanshu is the best stone for suzuri and that ink with a bluish-purple tint is very expensive. The legend ends with a poem from The Tale of Genji *in which a suzuri is mentioned.*

Here an artisan, working with the intense concentration typical of the craftsmen in this book, is carving out a large suzuri with a chisel. Inkstones of this size, still in use today, are not meant for everyday domestic use but are designed, rather, to accommodate the broad brushes of painters and writers of decorative calligraphy. At the artisan's left are two finished suzuri of the ordinary kind: a plain one in the favored oblong shape and another in a round, ornamented style. At his right are two more of his chisels.

The artisan's two assistants, garbed in handsome—if inappropriate—kimono, are sawing in half a porous rock of the type commonly used for making suzuri. The shaven head of one of the two helpers suggests that he might be an apprentice priest, but his rather flashy kimono tends to contradict this idea.

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